

Update: Systemic Diseases and the Cardiovascular System

Systemic Diseases and the Cardiovascular System: Introduction

Enfermedades sistémicas y corazón: introducción

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The *Revista Española de Cardiología* has traditionally been one of the principal driving forces in the diffusion of scientific knowledge in the area of cardiology. Continuous medical education has been one of the pillars in the development of many of today's most important scientific associations. Different methods have been employed to achieve this aim, the most important being scientific meetings and conferences, traditional publications and online courses. The "Update" section is one of the main tools of the *Revista Española de Cardiología*, journal of the *Sociedad Española de Cardiología*, to achieve this purpose.

In previous years, the titles have tackled areas as important as "Cardiovascular Diseases in Women" (2006),¹ "Non-Coronary Arterial Disease" (2007),² "Cardiovascular Prevention" (2008),³ "Translational Cardiovascular Medicine" (2009),⁴ and "The Right Heart and Pulmonary Circulation" (2010).⁵ All of these efforts have been very popular with the readers of the Journal.

In this new edition of "Update", corresponding to 2011, we wanted to tackle a series of subjects that are not strictly cardiovascular, but are nonetheless very important for the cardiologist. Hence the title, "Systemic diseases and the cardiovascular system". The reason for choosing this topic can be summarized as follows: (1) From day to day, the patients that a cardiologist must deal with present greater complexity, due to more associated comorbidities; (2) The patients a cardiologist generally treats are generally the elderly, which contributes to a high prevalence of comorbidities as well as cardiovascular diseases; (3) Our society demands a continued "fight" on behalf of patients with other serious diseases, which increases demand for cardiological care; (4) Cardiologists must interact with other specialist colleagues to coordinate the treatment of complex patients; and (5) The treatment and management of people with non-cardiac diseases change rapidly, forcing cardiologists to be up-to-date on everything that may affect the cardiovascular system.

Even though the reader of *Revista Española de Cardiología* will note that some of the subjects, such as those related to pregnancy or aging, do not tackle "diseases" as such, this title was chosen, despite its limitations, for its ability to direct the reader quickly to the content of the 2011 "Update".

The main aim of this set of review articles is, in itself, the reason for creating it: to attempt to offer the cardiologist a practical, interesting and up-to-date compendium of the essential knowledge

needed to better manage patients with extra-cardiac problems. It goes without saying how useful this resource can be when carrying out "interconsultations" with other departments at the workplace, or discussing and managing interdisciplinary patients jointly with other medical specialists. All of this will be addressed clearly, practically and concisely in the various "Update" chapters. To achieve this, we have turned to experts of the highest order to write on each of the subjects. Many of them are not cardiologists, but they have taken into account when choosing the content of their chapters that their writing is to be fundamentally directed at cardiologists. The aim was to choose experts in each area who could enlighten the reader of *Revista Española de Cardiología* with their experience and point of view.

Unlike other "Update" editions, the chapters in the 2011 edition will be completely independent from each other and there will be no continuity in their content. Therefore, the reader can choose to read the chapters in any order, depending on their interests and needs. The subjects dealt with in this "Update" include:

- *Obesity, Diabetes and the Cardiovascular System*: This section summarizes the relationship that exists between diabetes mellitus, obesity and cardiovascular diseases. Obesity is a cardiovascular risk factor that is rapidly gaining prevalence in our society, becoming a major health problem not only in adults, but also in children and adolescents. Diabetes can be considered as a cardiovascular disease equivalent.⁶
- *The Cardiovascular System and Endocrine Disease*: It is especially important for cardiologists to know about certain endocrinopathies that can have repercussions for the cardiovascular system, as well as knowing that cardiovascular drugs can cause iatrogenic endocrinopathies. In this chapter the review article, written from a cardiological point of view, focuses on the aspects that are most closely related to the cardiologist's everyday tasks.⁷
- *Essentials of Oncology for Cardiologists*: This chapter looks at how neoplastic diseases and the treatments used to control them can affect the cardiovascular system. The primary or secondary cardiac neoplasms are not dealt with in this section, as this type of disease is discussed in great depth in many cardiology publications.⁸
- *The Kidney and the Heart: Two Organs Intimately Linked*. This section highlights the most important areas of nephrology for a cardiologist to know about, the precautions to take when managing a kidney patient and the consequences that diagnostic methods and cardiology treatments can have for kidney function.⁹

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- *Neurology and Cardiology: Points of Contact*. This chapter looks not only at cerebrovascular diseases, but also diseases that may have an effect on the cardiovascular system at other levels.¹⁰
- *Cardiovascular Disorders and Rheumatic Disease*. The most frequent questions a rheumatologist might ask a cardiologist will be described in this section.¹¹ Both specialists need to know the common problems of their patients to provide correct diagnosis and patient management.
- *The Ophthalmologist: the Cardiologist's Great Ally*. The eye is the “window” to the cardiovascular system. The experts will show the cardiologist how to get the most out of the information that the eyes provide, as well as how to understand the impact of cardiovascular diseases on sight.¹²
- *Hematologic Disease: From Within the Heart*. Topics relating Hematology and Cardiology, excluding neoplastic hematological disorders, are dealt with here.¹³
- *Aging and the Heart*. The aging heart behaves differently than a young heart. Understanding these changes is important to the cardiologist's ability in clinical practice to differentiate the physiology of aging from the pathological alterations that may arise.¹⁴
- *Psychiatric Disorders and Behavioral Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease*. How should a cardiologist behave when faced with a patient who suffers from a heart disease and has a psychiatric problem? How might medicines used to treat the psychiatric problem affect the cardiovascular system? The answers to these questions are explained in this section.¹⁵
- *The Heart During Pregnancy: Common Changes in the Cardiovascular System During Normal Pregnancy*. Expectant mothers regularly visit cardiologists. The first step to managing them correctly is knowing how to recognize the changes that are normal during pregnancy.¹⁶

We hope that the content of this “Update” is to the liking of the readers of *Revista Española de Cardiología*. Our goal is that this resource will be useful in our day-to-day work to increase the

cardiologist's knowledge and thus improve the treatment of our patients.

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