

Tratado de cardiología

Edited by Jesús Vargas Barrón – Intersistemas S.A., Mexico. 2006: 1033 pages, 513 figures, and 252 tables. ISBN 970-655-860-8

The Mexican Society of Cardiology has undertaken the difficult task of editing a treatise on the specialty that summarizes the present knowledge and the experience of its members in the field of cardiovascular disease. The result is this book of over a thousand pages, with more than 200 authors, which deals with all aspects of modern cardiology.

The book commences with a brief history of the Mexican Society of Cardiology, which entails, above all, a tribute to the pioneers in Mexican cardiology and underscores their role in the development of our specialty. As this is the school that contributed the most to spreading cardiologic knowledge in our language, the tribute is warranted and the history is one with which young people should be familiar.

The initial chapters are a compendium of the clinical knowledge, case history and physical examination amassed by the Mexican School of Cardiology over the years; in this respect, the set of symptoms and signs in circuits is original and broadens the classical concept of the term syndrome. At the same time, the treatise includes chapters like that focusing on molecular biology and the heart, which introduces the molecular and genetic bases of the major heart diseases. It is in this chapter that the fast pace at which cardiovascular research is being developed is most clearly perceived, and one notes the absence of the mention of the ion channel alterations (now referred to as *channelopathies*) and their relationship to arrhythmias, as well as a more extensive assessment of progenitor cell therapy.

The final part of the book is devoted to special chapters, including one dealing with heart disease in women and another focusing on geriatric cardiology, which are very valuable. They offer an in-depth look at the particular characteristics of these 2 groups of patients, often overlooked in other works. Moreover, given its origin, the book provides information on diseases like Chagas' heart disease that are uncommon in Spain.

Two positive aspects merit special mention. The first is the fact that, despite the large number of authors, the book maintains a uniform line and there is practically no overlap among the different chapters. Thus, the coordinators and editors have done a praiseworthy job. The second aspect, the references, the Achilles' heel of books of this type, given the rapid evolution of current medical knowledge, are well chosen, with publications as recent as 2004.

One criticism might focus on formal aspects, specifically the fact that the great number of authors makes it necessary to subdivide many chapters, making them more awkward to read. Moreover, the atlas with colored plates is somewhat short, and is placed at the end of the book.

In summary, the text is an excellent and complete compendium of the specialty, clear and explicit in its concepts, practical and very well presented. The Mexican Society of Cardiology should be congratulated for this work, and should incorporate new publishing supports, such as compact discs or the Internet, which would make it possible to update the content rapidly and regularly.

Ginés Sanz

Servicio de Cardiología, Hospital Clínic, Barcelona, Spain.