

# editorial

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## Update In Cardiology

**C**ardiovascular Disease constitutes the main cause of death in Puerto Rico for the last 40 years. With the consistent increase in the life expectancy at birth in Puerto Rico from 46 years in 1940 to 76 years in 2000 and prolongation of life of the population more persons reach ages where cardiovascular disease occurs.

Significant advances concerning cardiovascular disease prevention, diagnosis, management and rehabilitation have occurred in the last 15 years. The development of new diagnostic tests and tools (invasive and non invasive), the production miraculous drugs with unexpected functions at the endothelium, heart muscle, blood vessels and other tissues, the surge of new surgical modalities, the growth of nuclear medicine and interventional cardiology have drastically modified the practice of cardiology. The practicing physician has to keep up with these fundamental advances for the benefit of his patients and for maintaining excellence in the practice of evidence based modern cardiovascular medicine.

The Section of Cardiology of the Department of Medicine of the School of Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico thanks the authorities of the Puerto Rico Health Sciences Journal for allowing the publication of this issue with updated information of frequently encountered cardiovascular problems. All and each of these articles, on an important subject in cardiology, are produced by a Cardiology Fellow in training and a Faculty member.

The articles included address varied cardiovascular problems. The article on *peripheral vascular disease* is of great clinical importance as this condition occurs in more than 70% of patients over 70 years of age. The subject of *atrial fibrillation* deserves special attention as it is considered the most common sustained cardiac arrhythmia and is a major risk factor for embolic stroke an important cause of morbidity and mortality.

In a society where drug use has been in the rise, practicing physicians must be aware of the clinical picture, risk and management of *cocaine induced myocardial infarction* and of the different modalities of *endocarditis* encountered in practice.

After coronary heart disease, hypertension, valvular disease and congenital defects *cardiomyopathies* constitutes a frequent cardiovascular disorder causing congestive heart failure and requiring cardiac

transplantation. The highlights of the most important data for diagnosis and management of each one of the cardiomyopathies is summarized.

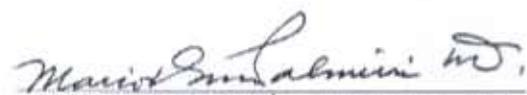
Among recently available diagnostic tools, basic and clinical information concerning the use of *cardiac troponins as a biologic marker* with high sensitivity and specificity for myocardial necrosis in myocardial infarction is presented.

The frequent overlook of the diagnosis of *pulmonary embolism* in patients with symptoms suggestive of common cardiovascular conditions prompted the inclusion of this subject as it constitutes the most preventable cause of death in hospital patients.

The advances concerning practical approach to the problem of *acute heart failure in the adult* is summarized. Finally, we have included an article presenting the experience on *cardiac ablation for supraventricular arrhythmias* carried on at the Cardiovascular Center of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. An article on the *selection of patients for heart transplant* is also included as this service is provided at the Center.

In the last few years multiple ad-hoc conjoint committees appointed by the American Heart Association, the American College of Cardiology and the European Society of Cardiology have prepared guidelines for physicians concerning different cardiovascular problems. The relevant recommendations of the guidelines concerning the problems addressed in the articles have been quoted in each of them.

We hope that the information summarized in these articles will be of help to our physicians in the day to day management of patients with the conditions presented in the articles.

  
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# Departamento de Medicina

## Sección de Cardiología 2004



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