

Book Review

A New Concept of Cardiology Textbook?

Clinical Cardiology: Current Practice Guidelines

By Demosthenes G. Katritsis, Bernard J. Gersh, A. John Camm

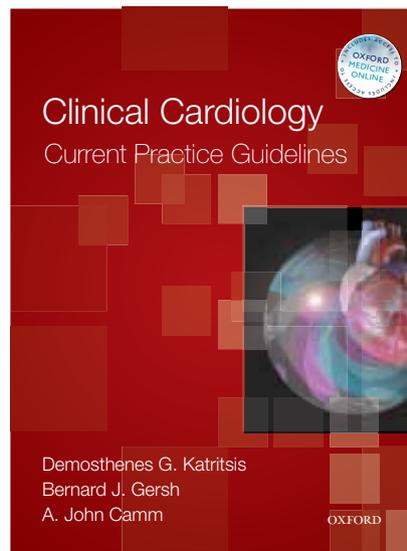
REVIEWED BY PROF. PANOS VARDAS, PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOLOGY

Medicine has been both a science and an art since the days of Hippocrates, but the recent expansion of knowledge and technological progress in the field of cardiology argues in favour of science rather than art. Numerous randomised clinical trials, new tools and applied innovations, novel drugs and therapeutic schemes, and updated practice guidelines by major professional societies continually appear. All these impose additional responsibilities on the busy clinician in his effort to practice evidence-based medicine, even in our current environment of networked and facilitated communication. In addition, currently available excellent cardiology textbooks are haunted by the ghost of time: when they appear, they are already in part obsolete.

Drs Katritsis, Gersh and Camm have attempted to overcome these obstacles by offering a new concept of cardiology textbook: they attempt to combine essential knowledge with practical information on why and how to diagnose and treat, and to keep this product continually updated as it evolves. Each chapter of this book contains a clear definition and classification of disease entities, followed by focused information on recent developments in the epidemiology and pathophysiology of each condition. A description of the clinical presentation of the disease with focused instructions on necessary investigations follows; finally, clear recommendations on management, as derived from the most recent evidence and current guidelines, are presented. The systematic and concise presenta-

tion of all recent guidelines from the ACCF/AHA and ESC is probably this book's most important contribution. Guidelines are not always readily accessible, since overlapping guidelines from different working groups may appear for the same condition, and updated documents are continually being issued. The authors have scrutinised and classified according to year of publication all guideline documents and their updates published in the US and Europe. The most recent recommendations are extracted and tabulated, and the resulting tables offer the opinion of both the ACCF/AHA and ESC at a glance. More importantly, this manual will be available online, and will be constantly updated by the authors at regular time intervals. Thus, readers should have the possibility of keeping up with all the new evidence that cannot be included in a book at the time of publication.

I believe that the authors have accomplished their goal. The book can serve as a reference source, as well as clinical tool that can assist the clinician in his everyday practice without the need for continuous searching in other textbooks, journals and the internet. I very much enjoyed the clarity and simplicity in the presentation of the current therapy of acute coronary syndromes, and the elegant discussion of the merits, and caveats, of revascularisation approaches. The chapters on heart failure are extremely helpful and clinically oriented. Cardiomyopathies and genetic channelopathies are discussed in the light of all recent information on genetics, the new revolution in modern cardiology. I also enjoyed the parts that can-



not be found easily in a single publication, e.g. all the useful algorithms for the differential diagnosis of a wide-QRS tachycardia, practical points concerning the choice of pacing mode and ICD programming, and how to deal with the complications of implanted devices. The fact that this is not a multi-author book edited by authorities but the work of three collaborating authors, ensures consistency in style and uniformity in presentation.

Last, but not least, I was particularly happy to see that the authors have been inspired by the Aristotelian precept, «πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει» (“all humans by nature desire to know”), and that a Greek cardiologist is the first author of this useful clinical tool. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to medical students, trainees, and specialists who have a thirst for updated, easily available information.