

PREFACE

Hypertension Medicine is intended to be read by clinicians and to be helpful in a practical and immediate fashion. I have chosen topics that should cover common questions and emerging areas of interest. It always seems logical to explore in depth the basic sciences and epidemiology that provide the underpinnings of our knowledge of hypertension practice. But I have tried to avoid this temptation, using only the background necessary to explain or amplify clinical ideas.

We have emphasized brevity. I have asked our authors to minimize references and to prepare chapters short enough to be read comfortably at one sitting. We have sought an informal tone, as though the writer and the reader are having a collegial conversation. I have also asked the authors not to shy away from controversy or personal opinions; candor is vital when sharing clinical information and new concepts with colleagues.

The first section of *Hypertension Medicine* deals with the relevant background to hypertension: why we diagnose it, and why in most patients we now believe it should be treated aggressively. We then consider some of the major underlying mechanisms of hypertension, particularly those that help explain our approaches to treatment. The next section focuses on techniques for evaluating patients before treatment, bearing in mind that so many hypertensive patients have concomitant conditions like lipid disorders and diabetes mellitus, and often already have evidence of cardiovascular and renal changes. The final section deals with treatment. The discussion of antihypertensive drugs is relatively short. Rather, our major emphasis is in dealing with practical issues of management: how to select treatment to optimize results in difficult-to-treat hypertensive patients, and how to deal with major concomitant problems.

I am grateful to my many colleagues who were willing to share their expert knowledge and contribute chapters to this book. I also thank my distinguished friend Norman Hollenberg for agreeing to write a foreword, and my office coordinator Jeanne Minsky who worked so effectively with the authors and the dedicated editorial staff at Humana Press in bringing this project together.

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