

PREFACE

Only a short time ago, if a man went to see his physician for erectile dysfunction (ED) he was often told that the problem was psychological. In the last 10–15 years there has been a growing appreciation of the concept that in men over the age of 50, one of the most common causes of ED is vascular. Vascular causes include endothelial dysfunction (the other ED, which is one of the earliest abnormalities in the spectrum of atherosclerosis) to full-blown obstructing atherosclerotic plaque.

Since the key component of an erection is vasodilatation, if blood vessels cannot dilate normally owing to endothelial dysfunction, then a normal erection will not occur. Endothelial dysfunction will occur when the blood vessel is exposed to certain risk factors—hypertension, lipid abnormalities, cigaret smoking, diabetes, and others. It is therefore no surprise that these same risk factors for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease are also risk factors for erectile dysfunction.

Erectile dysfunction is a common problem in the cardiac patient. The purpose of *Heart Disease and Erectile Dysfunction* is to review the problem of erectile dysfunction from a cardiac standpoint. Chapters have been written by cardiologists, urologists, psychologists, pharmacologists, and basic scientists alike to synthesize the problem of erectile dysfunction as it relates to heart disease, review the physiology of ED, review the current therapies for ED and how they may interact with the cardiac system, review the potential application of the phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors to cardiovascular disease, and review guidelines for dealing with the cardiac patient seeking help for ED. We hope that this is the first of many books that might help define a new subspecialty of “uro-cardiology” or “cardio-urology.”

I would like to thank Chris Cannon, MD, and Paul Dolgert for their encouragement in editing this text. I would also like to thank all of the contributing authors as well as my administrative assistant, Cathy Davisson, for help with typing and organizing the chapters.

The drugs, indications for drugs, and drug dosages may or may not be approved for general use by the Food and Drug Administration. Physicians should consult the package inserts and/or Physicians’ Desk Reference for drug indications, contraindications, side effects, precautions, warnings, and dosages as recommended.

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<http://www.springer.com/978-1-58829-216-2>

Heart Disease and Erectile Dysfunction

Kloner, R. (Ed.)

2004, X, 300 p. 40 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58829-216-2

A product of Humana Press