Preface

The field of hepatology has never been so dynamic as it is today, with advances in the understanding of disease pathogenesis, imaging, and therapeutics all providing an unparalleled opportunity to treat patients who suffer from the complications of cirrhosis. However, such treatments require careful assessment for efficacy and value. Moreover, some interventions such as liver transplantation are only available to a select group of patients. Determining disease prognosis, who should be considered for transplant, and how to manage patients that are terminally ill with cirrhosis are challenges faced by practitioners on a daily basis.

Cirrhosis is the twelfth leading cause of mortality in the USA accounting for more than 30,000 deaths per year. In addition, it accounts for 4–5% of deaths of people between the ages of 45 and 54 years in the USA. These numbers are driven by the complications patients with cirrhosis suffer. In addition, the economic burden of cirrhosis and its complications are considerable as the estimated national average cost in the USA for treatment ranges from $14 million to $2 billion, depending on disease etiology. Thus a thorough understanding of the diagnosis and management of cirrhosis and its complications are mandatory for the practicing physician.

In this book, we have assembled an outstanding international group of experts that provide insights into the management of the most common complications of cirrhosis. We would like to thank them for their exceptional contributions that summarize the currently available management options and review increasingly important topics surrounding delivery of care to patients with cirrhosis.

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Finally, we remember the countless patients and families who we have cared for over the years—it is our sincere wish that the information so generously provided by this book’s contributors will provide comfort and hope, prolong life, and alleviate suffering to current and future patients.
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