

Preface



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Guest Editors

The knowledge of mountain climbers and the variety of equipment that they use have greatly increased in the past few decades, as climbing gear, communication devices, and navigation tools have all improved. Yet we still read in the media of mountaineering accidents. Clearly, as mountain climbing has become technically easier, more and more people have been climbing up steeper and more difficult mountains. Similarly, in modern surgical care, we have seen knowledge and technology get better as we go yet more aggressively up the “steepest mountains.” It is our hope in this issue to address the many aspects of the medical care and preparation of patients, so that when they face surgery, the groundwork will be ideal and the approach (and descent), the least arduous.

Perioperative patient care involves, in essence, the arrival of a medical patient, the preoperative preparation by the medical, anesthesia, and surgical teams, the care during surgery by the anesthesiologist and surgeon, and then the full input of all the teams after surgery. All this then leads back to what is likely to be the long-term care by the medical team alone. The process often entails a detailed assessment of multiple medical and surgical diagnoses, the optimization of ongoing disease processes, a determination of the risk and even reasonableness of the planned surgery, and then the planning and performance of the intraoperative and postsurgical procedures and therapies.

We have addressed many of the aspects of the preoperative care of patients in invited articles, all of which include authors from multiple specialties, including internists or medical specialists, anesthesiologists, and surgeons. In the perioperative period, the input and perspectives of all 3 members of the perioperative team are essential in ensuring optimal safety. We are fortunate to have an outstanding group of authors from a diverse group of institutions, who provided unique insights. We

hope that our readers will find the many specialized discussions helpful, and that this will make the mountain of problems faced by our patients heading into surgery more readily conquered.

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