

Foreword



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Urolithiasis is a common disorder, and epidemiologic studies over many years have demonstrated that approximately 15% of individuals will form a stone sometime during their lifetime. Although calcium oxalate stones predominate, the cause of stone formation varies, based on differences in urinary parameters. Approximately 2 to 3 decades ago, much effort was expended in understanding the mechanisms of stone formation, and treatment modalities were developed. These efforts have had significant in reducing the incidence of stone formation and in controlling new stone growth.

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in urologic care during the past several decades has been in the management of patients who have existing stones in the urinary tract. The development of extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy followed by a variety of endoscopic techniques has reduced the morbidity associated with stone

treatment and also has led to further developments and innovations that have had a very positive impact on our patient population.

Dr. Margaret Pearle has compiled an excellent group of articles reviewing many of the issues related to stone evaluation and treatment. Both the different types of stone and new technological developments for the management of renal and ureteral stones are addressed. The economics of stone management, which is recognized as increasingly important, is also clearly outlined in this issue.

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