

Preface

Endocrine and Metabolic Emergencies



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Guest Editors

Endocrinology and metabolism often have been viewed as just biochemistry topics, more theoretical than practical, that were to be memorized in medical school. In fact, mastery of this field is essential for the effective practice of emergency medicine. This issue is designed to make the knowledge of this field become more pertinent and accessible to emergency physicians. While including the pathophysiology that is necessary for understanding basic details, each article emphasizes the emergency department presentation, diagnostic evaluation, and immediate therapeutic approach to the patient who presents with a metabolic problem.

One of the goals of the editors was to address topics not often covered in emergency medicine textbooks. Original subjects like the approach to anabolic steroids and fuel metabolism in light of today's fitness and diet crazes are two timely topics in emergency medicine. Some articles challenge long-standing dogma in emergency medicine, such as the conventional practice of using sodium bicarbonate for every patient with hyperkalemia. The current emphasis on monitoring and treating hyperglycemia in critical care patients also is examined.

Finally, the editors have tested these articles in their own practice in the emergency department. For instance, while caring for a 3-day-old infant with hypoglycemia, the editors followed the step-by-step list in the newborn and childhood metabolic crisis article. This clear, concise guide helped differentiate the concerns raised about this patient who was treated appropriately. The simplified logical work-up of a patient with hyponatremia is also comprehensive and efficient. The editors have put an emphasis on the

use of reference tables for critical areas, to make it easy to use the text as a bedside resource.

This issue of *Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America* will provide some interesting reading and many useful tips for treating patients in the emergency department. The editors would like to thank the article authors for their time, dedication, and interest in this collaborative effort. The editors would especially like to thank their families for their patience and support of this work, with extra gratitude given to Diane Wagner for her many helpful suggestions.

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