

Preface

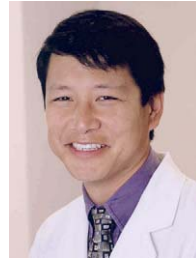
The ECG in Emergency Medicine



Richard A. Harrigan, MD



William J. Brady, MD
Guest Editors



Theodore C. Chan, MD

The electrocardiogram (ECG) is an ideal tool for the practice of emergency medicine—it is non-invasive, inexpensive, easy to use, and it yields a wealth of information. All emergency physicians interpret multiple ECGs every day—and at times the most critical decisions of any given day are based on ECG interpretation at the bedside, such as in the assessment of the patients with chest pain, dyspnea, or even shock. However, although the “high profile” disease states—such as acute coronary syndrome—classically are linked with this indispensable tool, we use the ECG for much more.

Although traditionally the ECG is thought of as a cardiologist’s tool, it is really the domain of any medical practitioner making real-time assessments of patients—the emergency physician, the internist, the family practitioner, the intensivist, to name a few. As such, we all must become very comfortable with the many facets and subtleties of ECG interpretation. We should be expert in the urgent and emergent interpretation of the ECG. It is our hope that this issue of the *Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America* will help the physician on the front lines of patient care understand the complex wealth of information delivered by this relatively simple test.

In this issue, we examine the ECG in traditional and nontraditional realms. Diagnosis of dysrhythmia and acute coronary syndromes is an obvious focus of this text. Several articles take an in-depth look at other morphologic issues we are often confronted with on the ECG; namely intraventricular conduction delays, the manifestations of electronic cardiac pacemakers, and the subtleties of ST segment/T wave changes as they pertain to the many syndromes that cause them. The issue also includes several

articles on electrocardiographic manifestations of noncoronary disease, both cardiac and systemic. The ECG is also examined in subpopulations important to the emergency medicine practitioner: the child and the poisoned patient. Finally, more atypical topics of ECG interpretation are included; we offer an article on the detection of electrode misconnection and artifact, and look toward the horizon with a consideration of newer techniques and technologies.

While working on this issue of the *Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America*, we considered not only healthcare provider education, but the constraints of rendering patient care in the emergency setting. We would like to recognize all emergency health care providers for their dedicated work for individuals in need. This work is performed at times under extreme circumstances with minimal information and resource. And yet, the outcome is most often positive. We should indeed all be proud of our profession.

We are happy to present a broad range of talented authors from across the country, and we feel they have provided you with an excellent, in-depth discussion of the ECG. It is our hope that you will enjoy this issue on *The ECG in Emergency Medicine*, and that it will serve as informative reading to you as well as a valued reference for the future.

Richard A. Harrigan, MD
Department of Emergency Medicine
Temple University Hospital and School of Medicine
Jones 1005 Park Avenue and Ontario Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140

E-mail address: richard.harrigan@tuhs.temple.edu

William J. Brady, MD
University of Virginia School of Medicine
Department of Emergency Medicine
PO Box 800309
Charlottesville, VA 22908

E-mail address: Wb4z@virginia.edu

Theodore C. Chan, MD
UCSD
Department of Emergency Medicine
200 West Harbor Drive, #8676
San Diego, CA 92103

E-mail address: tcchan@ucsd.edu