

Preface



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Guest Editors

Atrial fibrillation is the most commonly sustained arrhythmia in man. While it affects millions of people around the globe already, its incidence will reach epidemic proportions as people live longer and we become even more successful in treating other cardiovascular diseases. Until recently, atrial fibrillation did not receive the attention it deserved, in part because we did not have much of a therapeutic armamentarium that could be brought to bear. A new wave of enthusiasm appeared about a decade ago after Haissaguerre and colleagues showed that atrial fibrillation could be initiated by ectopic beats originating in the pulmonary veins and that ablation of these sites can be curative.

An incredible effort by physicians, scientists and the medical industry over the last decade has brought forth new insights and therapeutic tools, and we have reached a level of maturity to indeed cure many patients with atrial fibrillation. We were privileged to take pause and summarize how much we have learned and reflect on what lies ahead in *Medical Clinics of North America* in January 2008. We are pleased that Dr. Michael Crawford, Consulting Editor for *Cardiology Clinics*, felt that its readership would benefit from an updated issue.

Our initial panel of authors has updated their contributions in this issue of *Cardiology Clinics*. We have added three new articles that the readers of the *Clinics* may also find interesting.

We are grateful to our friends and colleagues who have contributed their time and energy in writing these reviews. All of the contributors are busy investigators and well-known experts in the field. We have enjoyed reading their perspectives, and we hope that readers will also find these reviews helpful in obtaining an up-to-date understanding of this ever more important disease.

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