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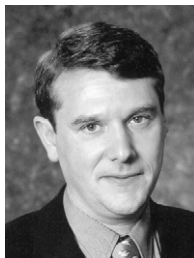
ENDOCRINOLOGY
AND METABOLISM
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Preface

Evidence-based endocrinology



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Guest Editors

In this issue of *Endocrinology and Metabolism Clinics of North America*, we are pleased to offer an overview of evidence-based endocrinology. This overview includes a definition of evidence-based medicine and several articles on research methodology. Of particular importance are the articles on etiology (how to establish it traditionally and in the context of gene-environment interactions) and the discussion of qualitative research in endocrinology. This issue also includes aspects of the practice of evidence-based endocrinology, such as finding evidence and using evidence about therapy and diagnosis in clinical practice. Many professional organizations are producing practice guidelines in endocrinology. The authors discuss the process of building an evidence-based guideline and the methodologic quality of those available. Finally, the authors provide examples of systematic reviews and metaanalyses, summaries that represent best evidence to guide clinical practice. The article concerning osteoporosis demonstrates how a series of systematic reviews can illuminate a whole area of endocrine practice.

In a field in which diagnostic maneuvers and therapeutic interventions are based on a thorough understanding of physiology and its derangements and on strongly rooted traditions, some may find that evidence-based endocrinology runs counter to accepted strategies for clinical practice. We hope that with this issue, the endocrinologist will gain a better understanding of

what evidence-based medicine is and how this paradigm shift in the practice of medicine likely will affect the practice of endocrinology.

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