

## Preface



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*Guest Editor*

Until recently, there were no other specialties in medicine so uncomfortable with each other, and hence so isolated, than endocrinology and critical care medicine. Fortunately, the two “alien” disciplines have recently joined forces in successful attempts to perform high-quality research to clarify the unknown. By integrating endocrinology in critical care medicine (or perhaps I should say vice versa), new experimental and clinical data on the complex endocrine and metabolic derangements accompanying nonendocrine severe illnesses became available, which generated important novel insights with relevant clinical implications. In addition, the state-of-the-art diagnosis and management of primary endocrine diseases that represent life-threatening situations leading to intensive care unit (ICU) admission have been updated. This issue aims at compiling all these new findings into one volume, thereby attempting to become the first compilation of interest to both disciplines, endocrinology and critical care medicine. It indeed covers both areas of “acute endocrinology” that are often taken care of at distant sites within hospitals. The first part deals with the classic life-threatening illnesses caused by primary endocrine diseases, such as thyrotoxicosis, hypothyroidism, pheochromocytoma, severe hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia, and acute adrenal crises. The second part of the issue looks at endocrinology from the ICU side, starting with a general overview of the dynamic neuroendocrine and metabolic stress responses in the condition of intensive care-dependent nonendocrine critical illness. Alterations within several of the endocrine axes briefly touched on in the overview article are then further discussed in detail in the following articles: critical illness–induced alterations within the

growth hormone axis, the thyroid axis, and the pituitary adrenal axis; changes in catecholamines; glucose control; and salt and water metabolism. The last article on salt and water disturbances bridges the endocrine and nonendocrine causes and their specific approaches.

I sincerely hope that this volume provides a unique and up-to-date overview of the state-of-the-art knowledge of interest to the most alien of disciplines in medicine and stimulates further interdisciplinary research in this important and exciting field.

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