

## Preface



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*Guest Editors*

Historically, women's health services have been relegated to reproductive concerns. Physiatrists consider women's health in a much broader context, as we have been trained to do for all patients. This larger context inspired us to bring together this issue of the *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics*. Because of their knowledge of the musculoskeletal system, the nervous system, and awareness of the relationship between pain, physiology, and function, physiatrists are uniquely qualified to manage girls and women who have painful and debilitating conditions.

One key factor in providing appropriate care is matching the patient's problem with the patient's place in her lifespan. Health behaviors in childhood set the stage for bone development, skill acquisition, weight management, body image, and self-esteem. The childbearing years bring unique experiences to women's lives with associated biomechanical, hormonal, and psychosocial changes that set the tone for her future mind and body. Cancers specific to the reproductive system and their sequelae, such as lymphedema, bring medical and functional challenges to women and health care providers. For women who have cancer, physiatrists can provide care that focuses on function during and after treatment that goes beyond the focus of the oncology health care providers. Midlife and the hormonal changes and changes in body composition bring a host of associated medical problems. Exercise and physical activity can mediate these problems and maintain and improve failing physical function, especially in the setting of chronic health conditions such as osteoarthritis and heart disease. Aging women have expectations for health, quality of life, and independence.

Physiatrists can partner with older women for conservative management of osteoporosis, with the focus, again, being on function. Physiatrists are leading the way in research and education about osteoporosis and prevention and treatment of frailty.

We are delighted to present this issue of *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics*. We hope you will benefit from the expertise of your colleagues. These authors have dedicated their clinical and research careers to making a difference in the lives of girls and women by tackling challenging health concerns such as the female athlete triad, hip and knee disorders, and pregnancy-related musculoskeletal issues, to name only a few. We truly appreciate their affirmative responses when we asked each of them to share their unique perspective on girls' and women's health issues.

We would like to dedicate this edition to those women who have inspired us personally and professionally. We embrace and celebrate your mentorship and strength of purpose.

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