

Preface



Cameron D. Wright, MD
Guest Editor

I am pleased to be able to provide to my colleagues and students this edition of the *Thoracic Surgery Clinics* devoted to complications of esophageal surgery. I have asked my colleagues from across the country to share their views and hard-earned wisdom regarding the prevention, mechanism, diagnosis, and management of complications after esophageal surgery. Most of this volume deals with complications after esophagectomy. This attention is only fitting, because esophagectomy remains the thoracic surgical operation that consistently leads to the greatest morbidity and mortality. Common complications that are relatively specific to esophagectomy are examined in detail. I solicited manuscripts on two areas of esophagectomy that are associated with a fair bit of controversy in the recent literature to help individual surgeons easily review the recent reports on these subjects and to lend some clarity to these controversies. These areas, the effects of blood transfusion on morbidity after esophagectomy and the volume–performance relationship in esophagectomy, are ably dissected and fairly presented by their authors.

Complications after benign esophageal surgery are much less common, and mortality is rare. Patients who have benign esophageal pathology expect a significant improvement in their quality of life with little tolerance of risk. These expectations are further heightened by the revolution in minimally invasive esophageal surgery, whereby patients expect an excellent result with Band-aid–sized incisions. Although avoidance of early complications is important in these cases, the long-term result is more important. These issues are ably examined by two authorities. I hope you enjoy reading these thoughtful articles as much as I did.

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