Drug Dosage
The author and publisher have exerted every effort to ensure that drug selection and dosage set forth in this text are in accord with current recommendations and practice at the time of publication.
However, in view of ongoing research, changes in government regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to drug therapy and drug reactions, the reader is urged to check the package insert for each drug for any change in indications and dosage and for added warnings and precautions. This is particularly important when the recommended agent is a new and/or infrequently employed drug.

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Introduction

As perinatology advances, much knowledge on the human placental function is required. Until recently, obstetricians have shown little interest in placental morphology because this organ was discarded. Indeed, it may seem that such morphological studies have little to contribute to placental function. However, in many ways, the placenta reflects the course of prenatal life and from its structural alterations one may deduce prenatal deleterious influences on the fetus. As the perplexing diversity of placental morphology and function has not been sufficiently explored to make meaningful correlations with abnormal fetal growth, the meaning of placental dysfunction, which might be indicative of a deficiency or impairment of transfer capacity from the mother to the fetus, should be reevaluated. Due to progress in the application of ultrasonography and biochemical investigations, interest has lately become focussed on fundamental and practical knowledge of the interrelationship between the placental morphology and function. But many problems of placental dysfunction still have to be cleared up. This volume collects recent research work on placental morphology and function, and I have been fortunate in obtaining the collaboration of prominent authorities in these fields.

The main topics of this volume are related to the morphologic and ultrastructural bases of placental dysfunction, to the ultrasonic and biochemical evaluation of placental dysfunction and especially to placental infection. Hopefully, this volume will be helpful in understanding the basis and practical processes of placental dysfunction.

Hiroaki Soma