Advances in Cardiology
Vol. 41

Series Editor

Jeffrey S. Borer  New York, N.Y.
Pathophysiology, Evaluation and Management of Valvular Heart Diseases, Volume 2

Developed from “Valves in the Heart of the Big Apple” May 2–3, 2002, New York, N.Y.

A Symposium Organized by The Howard Gilman Institute for Valvular Heart Diseases, Weill Medical College of Cornell University

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66 figures, 1 in color, and 24 tables, 2004
Advances in Cardiology

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Bibliographic Indices. This publication is listed in bibliographic services, including Current Contents® and Index Medicus.

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www.karger.com
Printed in Switzerland on acid-free paper by Reinhardt Druck, Basel
ISSN 0065–2326

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this title is available from the Library of Congress.
Contents

IX  Introduction

Perspective

1  The Howard Gilman Foundation Lecture. Where Have We Come From and Where Are We Going? Valve Management Past, Present and Future
   Perloff, J.K. (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Epidemiology and Pathophysiology

9  The Epidemiology of Valvular Heart Diseases: The Problem Is Growing

16  Heart Failure in Aortic Regurgitation: The Role of Primary Fibrosis and Its Cellular and Molecular Pathophysiology
    Pitlor, L. (New York, N.Y.)

25  Is Prophylactic β-Adrenergic Blockade Appropriate in Mitral Regurgitation: Impact of Cellular Pathophysiology
    Starling, M.R. (Ann Arbor, Mich.)

Aortic Valve and Aortic Root Diseases

36  Valve Surgery in the Asymptomatic Patient with Aortic Regurgitation:
    Current Indications and the Effect of Change Rates in Objective Measures
    Isom, O.W. (New York, N.Y.)
48 Valve Repair versus Replacement When Aortic Regurgitation Is Caused by Aortic Root Aneurysms: Relative Advantages and Disadvantages and the Impact of Decision on Surgical Indications
Girardi, L.N. (New York, N.Y.)

57 Assessment of Myocardial Damage in Regurgitant Valvular Disease
Narula, J. (New York, N.Y.)

62 Cholesterol-Lowering Studies for Aortic Stenosis
Rosenbluth, A.; Fuster, V. (New York, N.Y.)

75 Perspectives on Diseases of the Thoracic Aorta
Elefteriades, J.A. (New Haven, Conn.)

Mitral and Tricuspid Valve Diseases

87 Natural History of Mitral Stenosis and Echocardiographic Criteria and Pitfalls in Selecting Patients for Balloon Valvuloplasty
Berger, M. (New York, N.Y.)

95 Surgical Treatment of Degenerative Mitral Regurgitation: Should We Approach Differently Patients with Flail Leaflets of Simple Mitral Valve Prolapse?

108 Ventricular Arrhythmias in Mitral Regurgitation: Frequency, Clinical and Prognostic Importance, Management Before and After Mitral Valve Surgery

112 The Case for Bioprosthetic Mitral Valve Replacement in Patients Aged 60–70
Chatterjee, S.; Jayasankar, V.; Gardner, T.J. (Philadelphia, Pa.)

118 Endocardial Cushion Defects: Embryology, Anatomy and Pathophysiology
Cooper, R.S. (New York, N.Y.)

127 Surgery for Atrioventricular Septal Defects
Quaegebeur, J.M.; Cooper, R.S. (New York, N.Y.)

133 When Should Tricuspid Valve Replacement/Repair Accompany Mitral Valve Surgery?
Gold, J.P. (New York, N.Y.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Strategies for Management of Postcardiotomy Cardiogenic Shock following Valvular Heart Surgery</td>
<td>Vigilance, D.W.; Oz, M.C.</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Selection of Techniques for Combined Valve Surgery and Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting: The Impact of Combined Procedures Involving the Aortic or Mitral Valve</td>
<td>Cohn, L.H.; Soltesz, E.G.</td>
<td>Boston, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>Aortic Valve and Non-Ischemic Mitral Valve Surgery in Patients Undergoing Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting</td>
<td>Schwartz, C.F.; Saunders, P.C.; Galloway, A.C.</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>Echocardiographic Doppler Evaluation of Prosthetic Valve Function and Dysfunction</td>
<td>Goldman, M.E.</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Author Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contents

VII
Introduction

The first volume in the series, *Pathophysiology, Evaluation and Management of Valvular Heart Diseases*, was produced in 2002. The stimulus to undertaking the work was the growing realization that valvular diseases, now understood as progressive concomitants of aging, are increasing in prevalence throughout our society and, indeed, have reached the point at which they must be considered, as a group, to be an important public health problem. Data about valvular diseases emerge frequently in the medical literature and, thus, approaches to patient care in this area must be re-examined regularly. Therefore, our hope in publishing the first volume was to highlight the most up-to-date understanding of maximally effective approaches to evaluation and management of these diseases. Simultaneously, we aimed to review recent developments elucidating pathophysiology at the organ, cellular and molecular levels that will serve as the basis for improvement in evaluation and management strategies in the near future and the longer term.

We chose to produce the book by requesting articles from the faculty members of the symposium, ‘Valves in the Heart of the Big Apple: Evaluation and Management of Valvular Heart Diseases’, which we produced for the first time in May, 2001, in New York City. Since the three-day symposium could not cover all areas of valvular diseases, we knew that the resulting volume would be a selective rather than a comprehensive review of the field. We knew, also, that we planned to continue the symposium on a regular basis, and that subsequent programs would fill the gaps in the first iteration while providing timely updates, when appropriate, of areas already presented. The second edition of ‘Valves in the Heart of the Big Apple’ was held in New York on May 2–3, 2002.
The program was developed specifically to cover areas not discussed in 2001, as well as to present updates in the key areas relating to timing of surgery in asymptomatic patients. The result was a program in which more than three-fourths of the presentations focused on topics not discussed formally in the initial symposium. Several months following the symposium, we again requested articles from the faculty on the areas they had covered, appropriately updated for the lag between presentation and book production. The faculty comprised individuals whose research has shaped the concepts and practice of all physicians who deal with patients afflicted with valvular diseases. Therefore, the written reviews produced by this faculty are of particular value. Contributions covered many areas, including molecular, cellular and hemodynamic pathophysiology, prognostication strategies and results, technical approaches to measuring disease characteristics, pharmacological and surgical therapy, etc.

The product of these contributions is *Pathophysiology, Evaluation and Management of Valvular Heart Diseases, Volume 2*. It is intended to complement and supplement Volume 1 (and to be followed in 2004 by Volume 3). Together, we hope these books will provide a relatively comprehensive overview of contemporary thinking about valvular heart diseases and will be useful both to the clinician and the researcher.

This effort has required considerable support. The symposium from which it was generated was organized by The Howard Gilman Institute for Valvular Heart Diseases of Weill Medical College of Cornell University. As we noted in our introduction to Volume 1, we formed this institute to focus and facilitate our ongoing joint efforts to explore new and novel concepts in the field of valvular heart diseases and to apply them in evaluating and treating patients afflicted with these diseases. The Institute was enabled by the generosity of the late Howard Gilman and the ongoing support of The Howard Gilman Foundation, as well as by the kind and generous support of many other foundations and individual contributors, most prominently including The Gladys and Roland Harriman Foundation, The Schiavone Family Foundation, The Charles and Jean Brunie Foundation, The David Margolis Foundation, The Mary A. H. Rumsey Foundation, The Irving A Hansen Foundation, The Daniel and Elaine Sargent Charitable Trust, The Messinger Family Foundation, The Howard L. and Judie Ganek Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Communal Fund, and individual support from Donna and William Acquavella, Gerald Tannenbaum, Stephen and Suzanne Weiss and John and Susan Zuccotti. The second edition of the symposium, itself, received direct support in the form of much appreciated educational grants to Cornell from our major benefactor, Johnson & Johnson, as well as from Edwards Lifesciences, Corp., Medtronic, St. Jude Medical, American Home Products, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, ATS Medical, Inc., GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, Inc., Sankyo Pharma, and Sulzer Carbomedics/Scanlon Cardiopulmonary.
Finally, this book could not have been produced without the editorial assistance of Joseph Franciosa, MD, Adjunct Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiovascular Pathophysiology at Weill Medical College and a member of The Howard Gilman Institute. A world-renowned expert in heart failure who, more than 30 years ago, authored (with Jay Cohn) the seminal article on vasodilation with nitroprusside for patients hospitalized with this disorder, ushering a new era in heart failure therapy, Joe helped to shape the symposium and personally reviewed all written submissions, markedly alleviating our own responsibilities in completing this task.

We very much appreciate the participation of our colleagues, respected experts, all, in the field of valvular heart diseases, and the industrial supporters of ‘Valves in the Heart of the Big Apple’ who enabled the creation of the substrate for Volume 2. We hope readers will find the result useful.

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