

## Preface

The *Israel Medical Association Journal* has decided to dedicate this month's issue to Cardiovascular Medicine to provide insight into the extensive clinical and research activities performed in Israel in this field over the years.

The current issue aims to combine the various perspectives of clinical cardiology, non-invasive and invasive cardiology, as well as basic and clinical research in this important discipline of medicine. Original papers, case presentations and a review article present to the reader of *IMAJ* major topics in the diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery disease, acute cardiac care, epidemiology of congestive heart failure in Israel, rhythm disorders, electrophysiology, among others.

Heart failure is considered today as an epidemic with a vast impact on medical resources at all stages of the disease. Systolic and diastolic heart failure are the two major reasons for heart failure in Israel, which is similar to trends in other western countries. Both facets of the disease are associated with significant morbidity, rate and duration of hospitalization, and mortality. The Israeli medical societies of Internal Medicine and Cardiology have joined forces to review the clinical course of patients with systolic and diastolic heart failure hospitalized in the departments of cardiology and internal medicine in Israel. These interesting data, published here, suggest that the long-term prognosis in both groups of patients is grave and that more has to be done with regard to diagnosis, prevention and medical, surgical or device-based therapy to improve the quality of life and long-term prognosis of these patients.

Echocardiography and Doppler cardiography have made remarkable strides in our ability to assess cardiac patients at the bedside, in the lab or even during surgery. The quality of this diagnostic tool has recently improved remarkably and provides valuable information on cardiac and valve function. Three-dimensional echocardiography, quantitative methods such as speckle imaging, and ways to measure strain and stress in the myocardium have been developed to assist in the analysis and enhance image quality and our understanding of cardiac function. The natural history of valve malfunction and the guidance of surgical cardiac interventions using regular and transesophageal echocardiography offer invaluable assistance in treating patients with complex cardiac and valvular heart disease.

In Israel reputable systems have been developed for intracardiac navigation to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiac rhythm disorders. Complex diagnostic methods are being used in electrophysiology units in Israel, as presented in this issue, to guide ablative procedures and treat patients suffering from supraventricular and ventricular arrhythmias.

The considerable advances made in cardiac surgery for coronary artery disease and mainly structural heart disease, including valvular heart disease, are reflected in this publication. Arterial bypass grafts and corrective procedures to treat mitral valve disorders are described from two centers in Israel with impressive outcome and long-term results. The progress made in corrective surgery of the cardiac valves is a combined effort of surgeons and cardiologists where improved imaging modalities, as shown here, have had a significant impact on the applications of novel valve repair methods.

The editorial board of *IMAJ* is honored to publish this issue dedicated to Cardiovascular Medicine. It is our intention, together with the Israel Heart Society, to repeat this endeavor of reporting the clinical and research activity conducted in Israel more often in the future.

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