

Preface

Colorectal disorders are common diseases that are often chronic in nature. We are now working with an increasingly older population. This population trend increases the number of individuals with colorectal neoplasia, inflammatory bowel disease, diverticular disease, and constipation. We therefore thought that the beginning of the new millennium was an extremely relevant and timely period to prepare a new book about colorectal disorders.

The purpose of *Colonic Diseases* is to provide a bridge between basic and clinical research and the present clinical care of individuals with colonic disorders. *Colonic Diseases* examines the origins and treatment of common colorectal disorders, and it blends new outcomes and epidemiological research with molecular mechanisms of disease to improve our present and future understanding of colonic diseases and their management.

Colonic Diseases has been divided into three parts: Colorectal Physiology, Investigation of Disease Processes, and Colorectal Disease. Part I provides an extensive overview of normal colonic physiology. Part II utilizes the expertise of active investigators who are studying the pathophysiology of colonic disorders, and includes a survey of techniques that are used in clinical research of colonic diseases. Understanding the mechanisms of disease development may provide important clues for future therapy. In Part III potential symptoms, pathological and radiological findings, the differential diagnosis, presently recommended evaluation and therapy, and potential future alternative therapies for common colorectal diseases are reviewed.

Colonic Diseases is intended for gastroenterologists, gastrointestinal fellows, and scientists in gastrointestinal research who are interested in bridging basic and clinical research and diseases processes. This book will be a useful reference resource for primary care physicians who care for patients with chronic colonic disorders, and may also prove of interest to colorectal surgeons, although it is not designed to be a textbook for the performance of colorectal surgery.

I wish to dedicate this book to Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner, who inspired our great interest in colonic diseases at the University of Chicago, and to Dr. Joseph Szurszewski, who promoted a strong quantitative approach to basic colonic physiology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

I would like to acknowledge the great patience of my wife, Nancy, and my daughter, Kristina, during the preparation of this book. I wish to thank Ms. Debbie Williams for her excellent secretarial and managerial assistance.

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