

PREFACE

The past several years have seen a logarithmic increase in progress in the field of portal hypertension, both in clinical management as well as in pathobiology. For example, the implementation of beta-blockers in the primary and secondary prophylaxis of variceal hemorrhage and the establishment of endoscopic variceal band ligation in the management of acute variceal hemorrhage have become mainstays of clinical management of patients with portal hypertension. From a scientific standpoint, discoveries such as the elucidation of the hepatic stellate cell as a contractile sinusoidal effector cell and the understanding of nitric oxide as a key mediator of vascular responses have provided a cellular framework for the pathogenesis of portal hypertension. However, these discoveries and treatment advances are just the tip of the iceberg, with new therapies and pathogenic principles coming under scrutiny and likely to reach fruition in the years to come.

In this spirit, we hope that *Portal Hypertension: Pathobiology, Evaluation, and Treatment* will provide useful information for individuals actively engaged in the investigative aspects of portal hypertension, as well as clinicians who care for patients with portal hypertension throughout the world. The goal of this text is to provide scientific updates from leading portal hypertension researchers on key topics relating to the clinical and basic investigation of portal hypertension, as well as to provide input from leading portal hypertension clinicians regarding the revaluation and management of specific clinical circumstances relating to portal hypertension. We have garnered contributions from experts throughout the world, consistent with the global contributions that have been made in the field of portal hypertension.

We hope that the readership finds *Portal Hypertension: Pathobiology, Evaluation, and Treatment* useful as a reference as well as enjoyable as a cover-to-cover read!

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Portal Hypertension

Pathobiology, Evaluation, and Treatment

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2005, 528 p. 126 illus., 1 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58829-386-2

A product of Humana Press