

FOREWORD

The introduction of the three-stage Norwood procedure, coupled with neonatal cardiac surgical transplantation emerging as an option for the management of children with hypoplasia of the left heart, has represented one of the great challenges, and I think one of the great successes, in the care of children with congenital cardiac disease over the last 20 years. The surgical and physiological management has not been without its problems. Whilst progress has at times been difficult, it has been steady. Many centres, some represented by the authors in this book, have achieved outstanding results, and have provided inspiration for others to follow. It has, however, taken a long time for the surgical outcomes to be entirely satisfactory, and there is undoubtedly still a long way to go. Whilst early success may now be being achieved, the long-term outlook is still not normal for these children, whose systemic circulation is dependent upon the morphologically right ventricle after the Fontan procedure. Complications of the Fontan circulation are inevitable, and many may need cardiac transplantation in adult life.

Naturally, a newborn and seriously ill baby has a major impact on family life. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the views of the families should have an important place in this textbook. In addition, our own unit, and I know other units, have found the positive support of families with children having hypoplasia of the left heart to be overwhelmingly important to all the health professionals involved in the care of these children.

The authors in this textbook are to be congratulated for bringing together all the important aspects of the care of children with hypoplasia of the left heart, and providing a goldmine of information for their colleagues throughout the world. This is a fine textbook, representing the work of the last 20 years for a group of patients for whom previously there was no hope.

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