

PREFACE

This book is about evidence-based endocrinology, but it is not a “how-to-do-it” evidence-based medicine manual (indeed several other books are available that fulfill this objective optimally). It is a broad-ranging collection of essays, each with its own voice, that place evidence-based medicine in the context of endocrine practice and policy. My instruction to each one of the generous contributors to this volume was to be honest, be clear, and be bold. Some went beyond this request and submitted controversy and irritation, and I thank them for taking this risk. I expect all of these chapters to provoke thought and reflection in the curious reader who faces their content with an open but critical mind.

Evidence-Based Endocrinology is divided into four sections. An initial section outlines the past, present, and future of evidence-based medicine. A series of chapters on the practical aspects of evidence-based endocrinology follows. The third section is about the “evidence” in evidence-based medicine. The final section offers case-based discussions by practicing evidence-based clinicians. These chapters highlight both the usefulness of evidence-based medicine in endocrinology and its limitations as we currently understand these.

I selected the authors from among people I respect for their expertise, integrity, and rigor. My deepest gratitude goes to them and to their families for allowing them to produce these chapters mostly during their personal time. I hope the readers will appreciate this book as a testament of friendship, generosity, and scholarship.

I was honored to edit *Evidence-Based Endocrinology* at a particularly exciting point in my career and in my life. I ask the reader to imagine my professional life as one surrounded by the talent of those who have authored the chapters in this book. At the risk of offending those whom I am not mentioning, I want to single out three friends who have been instrumental in my personal and professional growth: Sean Dinneen introduced me to the excitement of endocrinology and systematic reviews; Steven Smith introduced me to health services research, to information technology, and to the “Jimmy Carter” way of getting things done when organizational hairballs limit progress; and Gordon Guyatt, the father of evidence-based medicine, who has shown me that genius, consequence, loyalty, friendship, citizenship, and mentorship can all be qualities of the same wonderful human being. Thank you.

My sons and my wife Claudia have been proverbially patient and extremely generous with their time, and have filled me with unconditional love. They are the best available evidence that I am the luckiest man alive. The time away from them editing this book is the greatest gift I can give to my patients who, I hope, will one day expect, demand, and benefit from the care of evidence-based endocrinologists.

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