

Preface

Lymphology is finally recognized by American medicine as a distinct medical specialty. Its acceptance has no doubt been hastened by a more complete understanding of the embryologic and microscopic changes found in lymphatic diseases. Technologic advances (e.g., scanning electron microscopy or lymphangioscintigraphy) have also contributed to our understanding of the lymphatic system.

As an increasing amount of knowledge emerges from the study of the lymphatics, it is clearly apparent that the venous system is intimately associated with it. This fact is readily observed by the authors.

Members of the public, as well as health professionals, are looking for new and reliable information on lymphedema. As cancer survivors age, their risk of developing lymphedema increases. Unfortunately, one common source of information, the Internet, may present information that is incomplete, misleading, inadequate, and often inappropriate.

Using evidence-based sources and their own extensive clinical experience, our authors have assembled an impressive amount of clinical and research material. They have created a pool of information that should help us form a more unified concept of the lymphatic system, and its many aberrations.

One goal of this book is to provide some simple guidelines for the physician who must direct and follow the patient's progress during treatment of lymphatic or venous disorders. This requires a basic understanding of the vascular disorders, available interventions and the need for life-long follow-up.

Another goal is to inform a knowledgeable public that lymphedema is a problem that can be treated—successfully. No longer should a person accept the concept that lymphedema is something they “must learn to live with.”

It is our collective experience that patients who face this complex, potentially disfiguring and disabling medical problem achieve superior outcomes when managed by a knowledgeable physician and an experienced therapist. They also demonstrate greater adherence to the recovery program.

Lastly, only through the concerted efforts of the “team,” physicians, therapists, and patients, can the insurance carriers be convinced that people with

lymphatic diseases deserve the same economic support as those with other vascular diseases.

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Lymphedema

Diagnosis and Treatment

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