

# Preface

Portal hypertension is associated with the most severe and lethal complications of cirrhosis. Despite the progress achieved over the last decades, the 6-week mortality associated with variceal bleeding is still on the order of 10–20 %. Awareness of the problems concerning the management of variceal hemorrhage has stimulated the organization of a series of international workshops aimed at assessing the evidence and issuing recommendations concerning the diagnosis, the prevention, and the treatment of this severe medical emergency. The most recent of these workshops took place in Baveno, Italy, in the spring of 2010 (Baveno V). In Baveno V, the recommendations were updated to incorporate the scientific evidence accumulated over the preceding 5 years; however, several “grey areas” remained, and some of them have been addressed in studies published after Baveno V.

This book is aimed at updating the scientific evidence concerning several aspects of variceal hemorrhage, including the natural history, the diagnosis of esophageal varices, the assessment of the risk of bleeding, and the identification of high risk groups and of patients who may benefit or may be harmed from different treatments. The different steps in the management of acute variceal bleeding are also critically analyzed. We managed to enlist some of the most prominent world experts in the different areas, who contributed their best in their areas of expertise.

This book is aimed at serving as a useful reference for physicians and researchers dealing with and interested in the different aspects of this challenging clinical situation.

We hope you enjoy this text as much as we enjoyed helping create it.

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