

Preface and Acknowledgments

When I first began to write about osteoporosis, it was meant to be a chapter in a rehabilitation textbook. But I found that I had much more to say. My initial ideas have now taken shape as a book unto itself with a clearly defined purpose: to assess the current state of our knowledge about osteoporosis and to make these findings available to the broad community of professionals who serve those afflicted with the disease. The central focus of this undertaking is the transition from the diagnosis of osteoporosis to early treatment, extended rehabilitation, and comprehensive management options.

This volume offers an expansive perspective, beginning with causes and consequences of the disease as such and extending to its manifestations within the context of related disorders as well as its wider professional, social, and economic ramifications. The concentric circles of osteoporosis, given in Fig. 1. of the opening chapter, delineate this construct. Several crosscutting themes, based on research and practice conducted in recent decades, emerge from this analysis. Some are based on new scientific findings such as the growing prominence of the concept of “bone quality” to supplement “bone density” as a measure of skeletal health. Others center on technological advances that have led to more effective tools for diagnosing and measuring the progress of osteoporosis, thereby promoting earlier assessments of the disease and improving quality of life. In addition, innovative, interdisciplinary approaches have enabled physicians, nurses, nutritionists, physical and occupational therapists, and pharmacists to bring their varying expertise to bear on the individual needs of patients. New medications directed at both prevention and treatment are continually emerging, with promising results. Medical and public awareness of the scope of osteoporosis, particularly its occurrence in men, and of the need to improve adherence to both nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic therapies is increasing, but still needs to improve. It is hoped that this book will advance understanding of these issues on a general level and provide a guide for those seeking to learn more in detail about the different manifestations of the disease.

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