

Caring for patients with congenital cardiac disease – Introduction

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THE SIXTH, AND FINAL, SECTION OF THIS Supplement is titled “Caring for Patients with Congenital Cardiac Disease”. In it, we have included reviews that address a variety of issues related to caring for patients with congenital cardiac disease, including analysis of data, training, organization of the cardiac intensive care unit, quality of life, intraoperative imaging, and databases relating to congenital cardiac malformations. The purpose of this section of the Supplement is to take time to ponder the future of our professions, and what will be required to improve this future. My own belief is that, to quote the American football coach Jon Gruden, “I think the future’s so bright here I’ve got to wear shades (sunglasses)”.¹ Still, we all must work, ideally together, to ensure this bright future. This final section of the Supplement reviews several ideas and concepts which are representative of areas that our professional collaboration and work will lead to a better future for both patients with congenital cardiac disease, and the professionals caring for these often challenging patients. Indeed, part of being a Professional is self-regulating the profession, and taking measures to improve the state of the art in this profession, and in the process, “raising the bar”.

The first review in this final part of the Supplement comes from Tom Spray, Chief of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Tom offers an interesting perspective about the methodology of achieving “advances” in our field of medicine and surgery. Next, Martin Elliott, Chief of

Cardiothoracic Surgery and Director of Transplantation at The Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in the United Kingdom, discusses how we now train paediatric heart surgeons, and opines on what is necessary to train these surgeons in the future. This manuscript is a summary of his well received and visionary “George Daicoff” lecture, given in Saint Petersburg, Florida, on the evening of February 16, 2004. The Daicoff lecture is an annual event which honours Dr. Daicoff, the founder of the cardiac programme of the Congenital Heart Institute of Florida at the campus of All Children’s Hospital. The third review is written by Anthony C. Chang, Associate Professor and Chief, Critical Care Cardiology, Texas Children’s Hospital. Anthony’s unique perspective in programmatic organization comes from his dual training and degrees, combining a medical doctorate with a master’s degree in business administration. Anthony clearly incorporates ideas from both areas of his education when he discusses the “Necessary Ingredients in the Organization of Cardiac Intensive Care.” Next, Kathy Mussatto, Research Manager of the Herma Heart Center of the Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, discusses “Quality of Life Following Cardiac Surgery in Neonates and Infants”. She reviews methodologies of measuring psychosocial outcomes during and after treatment of congenital cardiac disease. Clearly, as overall outcomes for treatment of these malformations improve, we need to measure more than simply mortality. Evaluation of psychosocial outcomes is paramount to the improvement of our professions. The next two reviews address intraoperative imaging, and the role it may play in the future of our profession. Much of the efforts discussed in these two manuscripts emanates from Great Ormond Street, The Congenital Heart Institute of Florida, and Miami Children’s Hospital. The seventh, and final, review included in this part of the Supplement

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discusses ongoing efforts by multiple societies and individuals to create a global database for the outcomes of therapy for congenital cardiac disease. The overall goal of such a global database is to improve the analysis of the outcomes of treatment of congenital cardiac malformations. The benefits of multi-institutional gathering and sharing of data are global, with the long-term goal of the continued

improvement in the quality of therapeutic options worldwide.

Reference

1. Henderson J. Blinded by the light? The Tampa Tribune, September 28, 2004. <http://www.tampatrib.com/Sports/MGBSHPMDNZD.html>, accessed December 3, 2004.