



Supportive Care in Heart Failure

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Heart failure occurs in almost epidemic proportions, placing a huge burden on both the healthcare system, and sufferers and their families. This can only rise over coming years as the ageing population, particularly in industrialized countries, increasingly suffers from heart failure and its related comorbidities. The care of this group of patients has evolved significantly over recent years as our knowledge and understanding of the pathophysiology of heart failure has developed. It has become evident that supportive care is integral to comprehensive heart failure care, and this book provides an evidence-based overview of heart failure aetiology, its management, and the supportive care required by patients throughout the course of their disease.

The complex nature of heart failure care requires a multidisciplinary team approach, and this book provides exactly that. It covers background information on the epidemiology and pathophysiology of heart failure, looking at both pharmacological and device therapy, and exploring the role of the surgeon and the interdisciplinary team. Symptom management is comprehensively addressed, covering early stage symptoms through until the last few days of care, and including both physical and psychosocial support. Prognostication and communication are then explored, including decision making and ethical dilemmas.

Heart failure has traditionally presented a challenge to physicians, as a generally progressive condition with significant symptoms, a poor quality of life, and high mortality. But by applying the principles of palliative medicine, it is possible to offer a supportive care approach to the disease that synthesizes the experience of both the heart failure specialist and the palliative care physician, and offers the best possible quality of care to this group of patients.

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