

ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

Published by Luis Rodríguez Padial in collaboration with Juan Alcalá López and Carolina Maicas Bellido—Editorial Edicomplet, SL. 659 figures (diagrams and photographs), 39 tables, and 18 decision algorithms. ISBN: 84-87450-04-0

Few techniques have become as widespread as echocardiography and this is due to its numerous advantages, low cost, high temporal resolution, and wide availability in any scenario. It is so widespread that it is currently on the way to becoming a genuine extension of physical exploration. In fact, it sometimes known—not without a certain dislike—as “the stethoscope of the 21st century.” At present, a large number of physicians engaged in predominantly clinical activities, such as cardiologists, internists, intensivists, anesthesiologists, primary care clinicians, etc, request echocardiographic studies to manage their patients better. On the other hand, the miniaturization of the equipment is leading to the technique becoming extended and “disseminated” to areas outside echocardiography laboratories. However, echocardiography, as a highly operator-dependent technique, requires great experience, a rigorous approach and high-level training. Physicians who regularly request these studies should also thoroughly understand the technique and its main advantages, drawbacks and limitations. The authors of this book, or manual, have attempted to explain echocardiography to the uninitiated, to physicians who are simply interested in the technique or those who, from a clinical standpoint, have to know about the technique as an aid to clinical decision-making. This is a practical book, oriented to physicians who need to understand the basics of echocardiography and thus be in a position to use a common language when treating patients. All the topics relating to transthoracic and transesophageal echocardiography are simply and effectively

described, from their physical principles up to the use of the technique in special situations, such as the operating theater or intensive care unit. Valvular heart disease, for which this technique is the gold standard, deserves special attention, and is dealt with in depth and accurately, including a brief overview of prosthetic heart valves and their problems from the clinical viewpoint. The chapter on ventricular function is thorough, extremely clear, and includes new data relating to the study of ventricular dyssynchrony in left ventricular dysfunction. The pericardium, aorta, the different forms of cardiomyopathy, cardiac tumors, and adult congenital heart diseases all receive special coverage. The topic of ischemic heart disease includes stress testing techniques and touches on other techniques such as contrast echocardiography, three-dimensional echocardiography and tissue Doppler imaging. The figures and their layout are meticulous, despite their profusion, and there are a large number of simple diagrams that help the beginner to read and understand the manual. In this regard, the authors have not spared any effort, as demonstrated by the 659 figures (diagrams and photographs), 39 tables, and 18 decision algorithms. Although a large number of diagrams are presented in the different chapters, a series of algorithms are included in an appendix to help in clinical decision-making and procedures in relation to the most common syndromes and diseases of the valves, pericardium, hypertension, cardiomyopathy, etc, and these are of unquestionable use for the clinician. The glossary of terms and the alphabetical index are practical and complete. The absence of numbered references in each chapter, although missed, makes it easier to read and could be useful to the beginner, although some general references are added at the end. In conclusion, this is an echocardiography manual for clinicians or a book with a strong clinical approach for those interested echocardiography.

Joaquín Barba Cosials