



Cardiomyopathies and Heart Failure: Biomolecular, Infectious and Immune Mechanisms (Developments in Cardiovascular Medicine)

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Heart failure is a major cause of death worldwide, most frequently secondary to a cardiomyopathic disorder. The roles of viruses, immunity, cytokines and genetics as sources of heart failure have been relatively understated in the rapidly developing world of clinical cardiology. Yet, great progress in molecular biology and the recent application of new techniques to studies of the etiology and pathogenesis of cardiomyopathies and heart failure has shed new light in an area ready to undergo major developments and advances. This book is an effort to present an up-to-date account of existing knowledge, including recent developments in this field. Chapters covering several disciplines including biochemistry, immunology, molecular biology, virology, epidemiology and clinical medicine have been included, offering a "bench-to bedside" and "bedside-to-bench" critical review of every aspect of heart failure and cardiomyopathies, by world renowned, expert researchers and clinicians. These opinion leaders review all significant advances in our understanding of heart failure and cardiomyopathies, and describe the improvements in diagnosis and treatment that are expected to optimize the overall management of patients. The identification of established or newly recognized molecules, cytokines, viruses, and genes, as well as an understanding of the mechanisms by which these factors may cause cardiomyopathic disorders and induce heart failure depends on a multidisciplinary approach which this book attempts to uniquely encompass.

Therefore, we hope that it will be an important resource, not only for clinical cardiologists, but also for general practitioners, pediatricians and specialists in infectious diseases, as well as trainees and graduates in biochemistry, immunology, genetics, molecular biology, virology, pharmacology, and epidemiology.

Akira Matsumori, MD, PhD
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

CARDIOMYOPATHIES AND HEART FAILURE: Biomolecular, Infectious and Immune Mechanisms

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1 SUMMARY

The clinical presentation of viral myocarditis is variable. When myocardial necrosis is diffuse, congestive heart failure develops, and later, dilated cardiomyopathy. If the myocardial lesions are localized, a ventricular aneurysm forms. When complicated by arrhythmias, myocarditis presents as arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy. When myocardial necrosis is localized to the subendocardial region, restrictive cardiomyopathy may develop. While it has not been established that hypertrophic cardiomyopathy may be a complication of viral myocarditis, asymmetrical septal hypertrophy has, in fact, sometimes been observed in patients with myocarditis. The importance of hepatitis C virus infection has recently been noted in patients with myocarditis, dilated and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

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