

PREFACE

Acute renal failure is a relatively common medical emergency, and has been estimated to occur in up to 5% of hospital admissions. Since it may result from a wide range of disease processes, and may occur in many different clinical settings, it is likely to be encountered by physicians from all specialties. Patients will frequently require rapid and effective treatment, often before specialist help is available, so all physicians need a firm understanding of the principles of management. Although the metabolic consequences of acute renal failure are complex, and the provision of renal support is technically demanding, many aspects of the immediate management are straightforward and common to ARF resulting from different diseases. Treatment can be rewarding, because recovery of renal function is expected in the majority of patients who survive the acute illness.

The main aim of this volume is to review current practice in the treatment of acute renal failure, bearing in mind that this depends on a thorough understanding of disease mechanisms. The book therefore starts with consideration of normal renal physiology, and of the pathophysiology of acute renal failure. This is followed by a review of the general principles of diagnosis and management. The major causes of acute renal failure are then discussed individually; each of these chapters starts with a brief review of underlying disease mechanisms, which leads on to recommendations for treatment. There is a separate section with chapters on the development of acute renal failure in particular clinical settings, such as the Obstetric Unit or Intensive Care Unit. Each chapter is illustrated by clear tables and diagrams, and includes “practice points” which detail specific approaches in each clinical situation. There are useful appendices on prescribing and nutrition in acute renal failure.

Although sections on acute renal failure can be found in the large renal textbooks, this single volume provides an up-to-date and comprehensive guide to all aspects of acute renal failure in practice. We hope it will be a valuable tool for all clinicians, including those in training, who are involved in caring for these patients.

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London, July 2002