

Preface

Cardiac surgery is a continually expanding field with the development of novel techniques and operations as well as the refinement of well-established surgical procedures. These developments fuel the demand for knowledge regarding cardiac surgical disease processes and the optimal therapeutic strategies currently available. Although several large volume texts exist, there are very few which aim to deliver this knowledge base in one concise book. *Key Questions in Cardiac Surgery* systematically covers all the main topics involved in the contemporary practice of an adult cardiac surgeon using numerous illustrations to enhance the reader's understanding.

In keeping with modern practice, the data and body of knowledge presented is strictly evidence-based. The book incorporates the current guidelines for practice from the American Heart Association and European Society of Cardiology, with up-to-date information based on current scientific literature. Each chapter contains important references for further reading and greater in-depth study. All the chapters have been written by a cardiac surgeon who has recently undertaken cardiothoracic examinations and reviewed by a cardiothoracic surgery examiner. Uniquely, the images have been drawn by a cardiac surgeon from an operative perspective.

This book is relevant to all cardiac surgical trainees and residents, at any stage of their training programme, as it provides them with the necessary knowledge base to carry out their daily duties. Adult cardiologists, cardiothoracic intensive care unit specialists, nursing staff, physiotherapists and other allied professionals working with adult cardiac patients, either pre-operatively or postoperatively, will also find this book key to facilitating their understanding of the principles surrounding adult cardiac surgical disease management. Importantly, the book is also an ideal revision aid for trainees and residents undertaking their cardiothoracic surgery board examinations around the world. Its concise yet complete coverage of the important topics make it the perfect guide to answer the

Key Questions in Cardiac Surgery that are often asked within the confines of an examination. The style and content of the book allow the reader to obtain information in an easily accessible format.

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Foreword

There are many ways to learn a subject. A traditional method is to read and review a large body of visual material and, having performed that exercise, to be subjected to testing to see what has been learned. Unfortunately, when the body of knowledge is large, it is sometimes unclear as to the relevance of individual items as they are perused. The consequence may be inordinate amounts of time spent on inconsequential bits of knowledge at the expense of the most critical components of the subject matter.

In his textbook, *Key Questions in Cardiac Surgery*, Narain Moorjani, writing from the vantage point of one who has recently undertaken specialty exams following completion of his cardiac surgery training, provides a most interesting alternative. Specifically, the work of determining the most critical aspects of the body of knowledge has been thoroughly reviewed and questions are asked as a teaching tool without the antecedent didactics. In this system, there is no uncertainty as to the elements that are regarded as important for the student. The text in this book is accompanied by very useful illustrations and photographs. Once again these visual tools are pointedly related to the question surrounding the anatomic or disease process. I have found this a rather fun way to test my own knowledge, even though I have been practicing cardiac surgery for thirty-five years and teaching residents during most of that time. The danger of a question and answer approach to learning or knowledge testing is the presence of ambiguity in either the questions or the answers. Reassuringly, such instances are remarkably rare in this book and it is clear that important forethought was given to the formulation of the test items. Moreover, there is a strong didactic component to the text because the answers to the question are brief, to the point and authoritative.

The strength of this book lies in one of the important words in the title, that being 'key': it focuses on the essential information that every cardiac surgeon should have at their fingertips. For this reason, I believe the book

is particularly appropriate for those in the late stages of their training or the early stages of their practicing career.

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Recommendations and evidence

The classification of recommendations and the levels of evidence used in this book are taken from the American Heart Association guidelines:

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| Class I: | Conditions for which there is evidence or general agreement that a given procedure or treatment is beneficial, useful, and effective. |
| Class II: | Conditions for which there is conflicting evidence or a divergence of opinion about the usefulness/efficacy of a procedure or treatment. |
| Class IIa: | Weight of evidence/opinion is in favour of usefulness/efficacy. |
| Class IIb: | Usefulness/efficacy is less well established by evidence/opinion. |
| Class III: | Conditions for which there is evidence or general agreement that a procedure/treatment is not useful/effective and in some cases may be harmful. |
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| Level of Evidence A: | Data derived from multiple randomised clinical trials or meta-analyses. |
| Level of Evidence B: | Data derived from a single randomised trial or non-randomised studies. |
| Level of Evidence C: | Only consensus opinion of experts, case studies, or standard-of-care. |