

If we were to play a game of association of ideas and I said “study”, many of you would reply “book”. Since we learn to read as small children, books exert a fascination on our minds; as teenagers, we then regard books as a more or less heavy burden. Eventually, books become the cornerstone of our medical education; we have to study books in order to pass examinations and acquire specific skills, until we attain specialist/consultant status. Thereafter, books apparently lose their pivotal role in our life. However, the longest and most important phase of our medical education actually starts after the completion of our course of studies. In this phase, learning is generally left to individual interest and motivation, although professional/regulatory bodies are making continuing medical education (CME) programs compulsory in several countries. Sources for CME include attendance at conferences or meetings, attendance at master courses, reading of specialty journals, and self-assessment schemes and distance learning programmes.

Reading books is rarely included among CME sources, nevertheless it remains the easiest to reach source of knowledge for any specialist. A good book may be read at any time and for any time period, can be interrupted and resumed at our wish, and has no difficult web address or username/password combination to remember. Therefore, high-quality books remain a foundation of continuing medical education in its wider conception.

The present book “Opinions on Hot Issues of Cardiovasology” is a collection of expert reviews written by key opinion leaders in the fields of Cardiology and Vascular Medicine in general, and offers an in-depth assessment of many crucial issues we face in clinical practice. Topics include coronary artery disease (adjunctive treatments in ST-elevation myocardial infarction, bioresorbable vascular scaffolds, chronic total occlusions, in-stent restenosis, revascularization strategies for intermediate lesions and multivessel disease, left ventricular assist devices in high-risk coronary interventions), structural heart disease (left atrial appendage closure), valvular heart disease, heart failure, pulmonary arterial hypertension, and comorbidities (hyperglycaemia and hypothyroidism). All the contributions offer a critical appraisal of the issue they deal with, including the analysis of the most recent evidence and a thoughtful discussion of all the relevant aspects.

Updated knowledge of these topics is mandatory for our practice and we may obtain it by attending meetings and congresses; however, this book offers a convenient and effective manner to achieve this goal. Continuing our medical education through the reading of this book will certainly represent a benefit for us and for our patients.

Marco De Carlo, MD, PhD

Chairman of the Working Group on Aorta and Peripheral Vascular Diseases of the European Society of Cardiology
Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory,
Pisa University Hospital,
Pisa, Italy
(Email: marcodecarlo@gmail.com)