This issue of Medical Clinics of North America highlights many important recent discoveries and advances in our understanding of a variety of pancreatic diseases. The title, “Inherited Diseases of the Pancreas,” draws attention to the major problems addressed in this issue (acute and chronic pancreatitis, cystic fibrosis, and pancreatic cancer) and the growing evidence that minor and major germline mutations, as well as acquired mutations, predispose patients to these pancreatic diseases. This issue is comprehensive, encompassing articles relevant to practicing physicians and surgeons, nurses and genetic counselors, students, and scientists with interest in pancreatic diseases.

Anyone familiar with recent scientific and medical progress in pancreatic diseases will recognize the outstanding list of contributors to this issue. The articles on hereditary pancreatitis (edited by David C. Whitcomb) cover rare and common causes of acute and chronic pancreatitis, insights into disease mechanisms, preventative strategies, and issues in genetic testing. The cystic fibrosis articles (edited by Jonathan A. Cohn) focus on the normal and regulation role of the cystic fibrosis transmembrane regulator (CFTR) in the pancreas and on recently recognized problems arising from CFTR mutations in idiopathic pancreatic disease. The pancreatic cancer articles (edited by Charles D. Ulrich II) discuss syndromic and sporadic pancreatic cancers, offer insights into the molecular causes, and provide expert opinions on screening, surgery and future directions for therapeutic interactions. Together, this information encompasses the cutting edge of advances in these dynamic fields.

At this point, the Guest Editors have three messages. A sincere thank you is extended to the authors who provided outstanding articles to this issue and thereby set the stage for this issue becoming a classic reference. Deep appreciation goes to our patients, families, and others who worked behind the scenes to help us gain insights into these clinical problems. Finally, we encourage the reader to study and absorb relevant portions of this material in preparation for
providing new insights and better treatments for those now suffering, or at risk for, inherited diseases of the pancreas.

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