Preface

It is with great excitement that we welcome you to this issue of *Medical Clinics of North America*, which is devoted to chest pain, one of the most common reasons for individuals presenting to an Emergency Department. Chest pain is a most challenging and complex symptom. Most individuals who present with chest pain are given no diagnosis or prognosis, which makes many individuals concerned that they may have a potentially fatal form of chest pain. The number of chest pain presentations is increasing not only in Western countries but also in Asia and other developing countries. Chest pain can be chronic and debilitating, and other forms of chest pain can be acutely fatal. For physicians, the most challenging aspect of chest pain is differentiating between cardiac and noncardiac chest pain in a timely and efficient manner. Providing a diagnosis for all patients will lead to a reduced level of anxiety and improved quality of life; a greater impetus on patient education and understanding will result in a decrease in repeat presentations and reduced work load for hospital physicians. In this issue of *Medical Clinics of North America* we have selected cutting-edge topics that we hope will be an asset to physicians working in emergency departments, internal medicine, primary care, and others. The topics selected are as broad as the potential number of chest pain conditions encountered by physicians in everyday practice.

In preparing this issue we selected the leading authorities in different areas of medicine, including cardiology, gastroenterology, otolaryngology, respiratory medicine, rheumatology, chiropractic, psychological medicine, dermatology, pediatrics, emergency medicine, and primary care. The authors have provided us with a unique collection of articles dedicated to understanding and improving the diagnosis and treatment of chest pain, and it was truly a pleasure reading and editing this outstanding collection of articles.

We would like to thank all of the authors who contributed their valuable time and expertise to this issue. We would also like to thank the editor of *Medical Clinics of North America*, Rachel Glover, for her patience and understanding when things were slow and valuable assistance in getting this important issue published. Guy Eslick would
like to thank Enid, Marielle, and the littlest one, Guillaume, for their support and love, and would like to dedicate this work to Leslie Vincent Stapleton, his Grandfather, who died of a heart attack after sheep shearing on March 17, 1965, aged 59 years. Michael Yelland would like to thank his wife, Carmel Simpson, for her love and support during the production of this issue, and to dedicate this work to his father, John Yelland, who died suddenly of a heart attack in 2000.

We hope this timely collection of outstanding articles devoted to chest pain will provide physicians with useful and practical information that will assist them in diagnosing and treating patients with chest pain with care and reassurance.

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