Recent studies have continued to demonstrate that over two-thirds of Americans are currently taking prescription medications. Fifty percent of the population is taking at least two prescription drugs, and these numbers are considerably higher in our patients over the age of 65 years. The field of pharmacotherapeutics continues to expand, and the choice of medications to treat the variety of medical and psychiatric conditions is increasing in number while becoming more “personized” in their application. More than ever, it has become essential that the practicing clinician have an understanding of the pharmacology of these drugs, their indications for usage, and most importantly, the potential drug interactions and adverse side effects that they may pose.

In this issue of *Medical Clinics of North America*, Dr. Kim M. O’Connor and Dr. Douglas S. Paauw have assembled an extraordinary cohort of expert authors that provide the necessary overview of the pharmacotherapy that would apply to the patients seen by both primary care physicians and specialists in care. The topics range from the most recent updates in the management of hypertension and diabetes mellitus to the new oral anticoagulant agents and the advancing field of immunosuppressive therapy and immune-modulating agents.

Although development of the software for our electronic medical records continues to evolve in reference to the “alerts” we are provided when we prescribe medications, they will never replace the deeper understanding of what would be the “right medication for my particular patient.” I believe you will find that the following articles in
“Pharmacologic Therapy” provide the detailed understanding as well as the practical information necessary to make these decisions.

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