In this issue of Medical Clinics of North America, the multifaceted aspects of urology encountered by medical physicians are explored. Medical physicians are on the frontlines of health care, and urologic health concerns prompt large numbers of male and female patient visits annually. While some urologic conditions affect primarily aging individuals, large numbers of genitourinary health issues are prevalent across the lifespan. For these reasons, familiarity with the epidemiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, management, and long-term treatment outcomes associated with urologic conditions is essential for the practicing medical physician.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among American men, with 1 in 7 US men receiving this diagnosis in their lifetimes. Prostate cancer has garnered substantial attention and controversy in recent years, with ongoing debate over how assertive clinicians should be in both diagnosing and treating this condition. Two articles in this issue thoughtfully address the complementary issues of prostate cancer screening (Catalona) and treatment (Weiner and Kundu) in the modern era. Arora and colleagues provide a highly informative and practical overview regarding the diagnosis and treatment of kidney, ureteral, and bladder cancers, conditions that can masquerade undiagnosed if the clinician is unfamiliar with their presenting signs and symptoms. Smith and colleagues round out this issue’s genitourinary oncologic topics with a thoughtful consideration of testicular cancer, a condition for which the prognosis has evolved over the last several decades with marked improvements in treatment outcomes, particularly for patients with metastatic disease.

Kidney stones affect nearly 1 in 11 Americans and can be the source of debilitating pain and life-threatening infections. Kidney stone incidence is clearly on the rise, which many investigators attribute at least in part to rising rates of obesity and diabetes mellitus. Ludwig and Matlaga provide an outstanding and practical review of urinary stone disease, including the optimal approaches for both diagnosis and treatment. Cutaneous lesions of the external genitalia can arise due to a number of infectious, inflammatory, and neoplastic conditions, and Yura and Flury have done an excellent job describing the
diagnosis and management of cutaneous lesions involving the genitalia. Male and female voiding dysfunction is a highly prevalent medical condition that can develop due to a diverse array of underlying medical abnormalities. Voiding dysfunction can cause severe bother and adversely impact quality of life for affected patients. Hussein and colleagues provide a compelling overview of lower urinary tract symptoms and benign prostatic hypertrophy in men, and Vo and Kielb expertly address the problematic issues of female voiding dysfunction and urinary incontinence. These two articles serve as effective roadmaps to diagnose and treat patients impacted by these highly troubling conditions. Kiechle and colleagues provide an extremely well-written contribution regarding the growing field of penile and urethral reconstructive surgery. Urethral issues are often diagnosed in a delayed fashion, long after the onset of associated symptoms. For this reason, medical practitioners should be aware that urethral stricture disease is the root cause of urinary symptoms for large numbers of men. The symptoms associated with urethral strictures typically do not respond to medical therapy, given that the underlying problem is a fixed anatomical narrowing of the urinary tract.

Fifteen percent of couples will experience fertility issues, and half of these couples have a male factor cause involved. Pan and colleagues have authored an outstanding article that comprehensively addresses the diagnosis and treatment of male infertility in the era of in vitro fertilization. This is an important article, given that historically the burden for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures has largely been relegated to the female partner, bypassing opportunities to treat the male partner. Sexual dysfunction (Bennett) and hypogonadism (Sigalos and colleagues) are both expertly addressed in this issue, including the wide array of effective treatment options available for each of these bothersome conditions.

The genitourinary system is not immune to emergent pathology, and the medical practitioner is often on the “frontlines” of care for affected patients. Familiarity with the clinical signs and symptoms of urologic emergencies is thus imperative, and Manjunath and Hofer provide a very well-written piece detailing the wide breadth of urologic conditions that require emergent intervention. Telemedicine is a novel modality of patient engagement, and early studies show it has great potential for increasing patient access to care. Miller and colleagues are experts in telemedicine who provide a thoughtful overview for clinicians who are considering application of this evolving approach to patient care. Finally, Miner and colleagues close this issue with an expertly written and highly informative article describing men’s health, which sits at the intersection of medicine and urology.

In closing, this issue of Medical Clinics of North America is comprised of a wide breadth of incredibly well-written pieces that cover the full scope of adult urology. The authors are all highly respected experts who have worked hard to provide a state-of-the-art perspective for each topic. Collectively, these contributions will provide medical physicians with an invaluable roadmap as they treat male and female patients facing genitourinary conditions over the course of their lifetimes.

Robert E. Brannigan, MD
Department of Urology
Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Galter Pavilion, Suite 20-150
675 North Saint Clair Street
Chicago, IL 60611, USA

E-mail address: r-brannigan@northwestern.edu
REFERENCES