Preface

Otolaryngology for the Internist

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Editor

The practice of Otolaryngology involves both the medical and surgical management of disorders and diseases of the head and neck. The anatomy and function of the otolaryngology, head and neck surgeon span a wide array of cranial nerves and structures that include the special senses of olfaction, gustation, hearing, balance, and the sense of touch as well as the vital functions of breathing, chewing, swallowing, and talking. This expertise includes the nose and sinuses (rhinology); specialized care of the pediatric population; the ear, hearing, and balance (otology and neurotology); the throat, including voice and swallowing (laryngology); cosmetic, functional, and reconstructive surgery of the face (facial and plastic reconstructive surgery); benign and malignant lesions of the head and neck (head and neck oncology); and the medical and immunotherapy management of allergy.

The internist is well aware of the high incidence of new and chronic visits related to these areas of otolaryngology, head and neck surgery (more than 25 million US adults a year are diagnosed with sinusitis alone, for example). A key question for the internist is often when to escalate a chronic otolaryngology, head and surgery disorder by referral to a specialist for medical management and/or surgical intervention. In other cases, management of these disorders by the internist requires additional information and methods.

In this issue, we explore the expertise of the specialists above for a wide variety of the most common needs for the internist. These include the traditional areas above as well as an introduction to some of the most common rehabilitation areas, such as audiology, vestibular physical therapy, and speech and language pathology. These specialists play a vital role in the restoration of function in the care and management of your patients. The internist and the otolaryngologist share many patients as there are many systemic diseases that have primary or serious manifestations in the head and neck area. Internists also have an increasing population of pediatric patients with chronic health conditions that age out of pediatric practices, populating practices...
with an increasingly complex array of disorders, including those of pediatric otolaryngology. Our authors have assembled a comprehensive review of these topics and others. We hope this issue will be of frequent use in the care and management of your patients.

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