Preface

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation: An Update for Internists

Research and clinical care in the field of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) have made tremendous advances since the field’s early days of treatments predominantly with exercise and modalities. The focus of PM&R on patient function with a holistic approach has now spread to other specialties in medicine. The growth of the field has increased the presence of PM&R physicians in communities and hospitals providing treatment for patients with restrictions in function due to injury, illness, or disabling conditions. As society has become more accepting of persons with disabilities, maximizing function and independence has become more mainstream in health care.

The goal of this issue is to update the readership on advances in specific areas of PM&R so Internists will be aware of what the specialty has to offer patients and the treatment options available. Another important role in PM&R is the expertise in the determination of the appropriate level of post-acute care for patients who are hospitalized, be it outpatient rehabilitation services, home care, skilled nursing facilities, or acute hospital level rehabilitation.

Management of persons with chronic disabling conditions requires an understanding of the physiology and the specific needs of these patients. The issues are often quite different from patients without these conditions. An understanding of these issues allows for appropriately directed medical care for the specific needs of these patients. The articles in this issue review the unique needs of patients with some of the common chronic conditions that PM&R physicians care for and the specific approach to their care. Normal aging, pain, and injury are other topics covered with a focus on treatment and maximizing individual function.
I would like to thank all of the authors who graciously gave up their time to write the articles for this issue. The authors were selected from a variety of institutions for their expertise in the subject matter. These articles are a concise review of some of the pertinent issues and serve as a starting point to give the reader a broad understanding of the topics. The hope is that this will lead to increased interest and understanding and further investigation of topics of interest to assist in the care of patients.

Thank you to Elsevier for this opportunity to address their readership and review what PM&R has to offer for patient care. I hope that you are able to integrate some of the covered approaches to the care of your patients and, when appropriate, involve our specialty in the care of your patients.

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