New features: 2

Heart mini-symposia

The launch of the mini-symposium format in this issue of *Heart* is a new venture and an attempt to bridge the gap between editorials and full education or review articles. The mini-symposia are going to be a regular feature in the journal and comprise a number of editorial length contributions, usually 3–5, dealing with different aspects of a particular subject. We commission international experts to act as

guest editors, and they are closely involved in choosing authors who provide particular views for the symposia. We are confident that this will achieve a balanced, high quality, and contemporary insight into many interesting areas of cardiovascular medicine. It is not our intention to reduce the status of our normal stand alone and linked editorials, but rather to complement them with the new mini-symposium format.

Professor Gerd Heusch is our first guest editor and we hope that you will find his mini-symposium on “Coronary microembolisation” both interesting and informative. As ever we keen for feedback and suggestions from the readership.

Iain A Simpson
Commissioning Editor, Heart

Roger Hall
Editor in Chief, Heart

Coronary microembolisation: introduction

We have come to recognise that atherosclerosis is a highly dynamic process in the vascular wall, which not only involves lipid deposition and calcification, but also inflammation and both cell proliferation and apoptotic cell death. We have also come to recognise that atherosclerosis is not confined to conduit arteries but extends into the microcirculation. Finally, we have come to recognise that plaque rupture with complete thrombotic occlusion of an epicardial coronary

artery, with subsequent acute myocardial infarction, may represent only the tip of the iceberg; moreover, repetitive, minor, and possibly subclinical plaque fissuring with embolisation of plaque material into the microcirculation may in fact be a frequent event, which occurs both spontaneously and during coronary interventions. Clinical consequences of coronary microembolisation range from acute, severe arrhythmias to chronic heart failure.

The editors of *Heart* have kindly provided us with this mini-symposium forum to highlight coronary microembolisation and its consequences, and thus increase the awareness of this phenomenon.

Gerd Heusch

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