Foreword

Epicardial Interventions in Electrophysiology

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Since the emergence of clinical cardiac electrophysiology as a subspecialty of cardiology in the 1970s, the field has evolved in the direction of catheter-based invasive therapeutic interventions. These interventions have allowed us to approach arrhythmia substrates that were previously unknown or incompletely understood and incurable.

Epicardial ablation was initially used for ventricular tachycardia in the setting of Chagas disease, and this ablation access was first used by our colleagues in South America, where Chagas disease is common. In March 2010, Drs Shivkumar and Boyle edited an issue of the *Cardiac Electrophysiology Clinics* focused on Epicardial Interventions. A decade has elapsed, and much has been learned about ablation of various arrhythmias using the epicardial approach.

In this issue of the *Cardiac Electrophysiology Clinics*, Drs Bradfield and Shivkumar have assembled a panel of international experts to update the readership on arrhythmias that can be approached in the epicardial space. Contents include a discussion of the epicardial space, access and safe maneuvering of catheters in this space, and ablation of various forms of ventricular tachycardia, rare supraventricular tachycardias that fail endocardial ablation, and atrial fibrillation. In addition, they discuss the complications of ablation from

the epicardial approach and the future evolution of this technique.

Despite the developments in this field, this technique remains in limited use because most practicing electrophysiologists don't encounter these complex arrhythmias in sufficient frequency to maintain adequate expertise in resorting to it when required. So, the technique remains limited to tertiary-care, high-volume ablation centers. However, that may change in the future. We hope the readership will enjoy reading this update of a still evolving field.

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