

## Foreword

Echocardiography is a manual skill. Unlike other imaging techniques, where a patient is positioned and a technician may press a series of buttons, echocardiography requires that a skilled operator apply a transducer manually to a patient's thorax. Moreover, as echocardiography is not a tomographic technique, the images obtained are neither uniform nor guaranteed to be of a certain quality or even spatial location. Hence, the quality of the images obtained is directly dependent on that operator's skill and experience; the success of the examination begins and ends at the hands of the person holding the transducer.

*Echocardiography Pocket Guide: The Transthoracic Examination* by Bernard Bulwer and Jose Rivero, provides an introduction to cardiac imaging with echocardiography for anyone interested in learning this skill. It will appeal to sonographers in training and beyond. It will appeal to cardiology fellows, emergency physicians, and any physician or health professional interested in learning echocardiography from a hands-on perspective.

In addition to providing an expert introduction to the process of performing an echocardiographic examination, this book is expertly illustrated and will guide users through the first steps of interpreting echocardiographic images.. A good sonographer needs to know what to look for, and how to look for it. While a solid understanding of the kinds of pathology that are typically seen are essential in an echocardiographers training, the most important thing an echocardiographer can learn is to recognize *normal*, as only then can he or she appreciate and understand deviations from normality.

As echocardiography transitions from a technology dominated by subspecialists to one that likely will be embraced by a growing number of practitioners, there will be a growing need for very practical instruction in this art, which has generally been taught by apprenticeship. This shift will likely be driven by the advent of smaller, more efficient and cheaper hand-held and portable echocardiographic devices that are beginning to transform cardiac imaging. This handbook has a central role in this transition, and will provide a wide range of clinicians with a foundation for the practice of the skills necessary for diagnosing patients using echocardiography.

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