



Evidences in Cardiology: from the Clinical Trials to the Therapeutic Behaviors

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To read a smart text is always a captivating trip and an adventure for the mind. “Evidences in Cardiology” definitely meets this premise. Regardless the position in favor of or against the opinions expressed in this text, the true intellectual honesty of this work should be pointed out.

In 2000, Carlos Bertolasi, MD, wrote the following in the first edition preface:

“Undoubtedly, we, as society, are going through difficult times. It would seem as if our elders’ clear objectives were gradually being blurred, until we find ourselves at the end of a millennium that lacks fostering proposals and attitudes.

However, millions of young individuals work or study eagerly, while an equivalent number of adults, with their effort and example, constitute ‘a silent majority’. As part of this majority, almost all physicians stay away from the media pantomime and work hard to elaborate positive signals. Luckily, we are in the presence of a fact with these characteristics. What signal is better than a book?”

Many years have gone by and this consideration is still valid; the society does not find identifying models and the multiple ethical mistakes occur on a daily basis. In this framework, these authors are an example for the new generations of professionals in urgent need of teachers to guide them along this road of ‘becoming physicians’.

From that first edition, with 15 chapters and 348 pages, which summarized the material for a course on evidence-based medicine, to this last edition, with more than 870 pages and 35 chapters, an interesting editorial progress can be appreciated. This fifth edition includes the necessary maturity and personality to be turned into a classic.

As with the first impressions, these authors keep the critical thinking on the alert and manage to awaken us from our conceptual slumber, they give us that forgotten vitality of a being who has questions, and they rescue us from the world swamped with answers.

On this occasion, a new methodologic chapter has been included: “What is true and what is false in medical publications”, whose aim is “to protect patients from an incorrect, rushed or commercially-dependent interpretation of the clinical trial results”.

This chapter reminds me of Nietzsche’s “philosophy of suspicion”, which consists in the task of doing as if nothing was evident, and distrusting everything, in order to try and ask new questions that deepen what is thinkable and possible.

As for the topics not mentioned before, the chapter “Pharmacological treatment of pulmonary arterial

hypertension” deserves, in my opinion, a special comment. First and foremost, because Dr. Gianni Tognoni, who is one of the authors, is considered a pioneer in the area of evidence-based medicine. Moreover, there is the deep analysis on “the difference between the patient-oriented clinical investigation and the one that gives priority to the pharmacological agent with marketing objectives”.

The most important and substantial clinical investigations in recent years have been commented and analyzed in the different chapters, with a clear position for the most controversial topics, such as the use of conventional or drug eluting stent, the implantable defibrillator for primary prevention, the surgery, or the angioplasty in carotid artery stenosis, among other issues.

In my opinion, the development of the topics related to cardiovascular prevention, acute coronary syndromes, and chronic heart failure is still one of the most integrative and deep analyses in international literature.

Most of the clinical problems are discussed in the book; however, some very interesting ones, such as myocarditis and images for detecting subclinic atherosclerosis, among others, are waiting for new editions.

The communication in the book is agile, pleasant, and didactic. The different co-authors are outstanding personalities from our area and from prestigious international research centers.

The ancillary educational materials used in the book are of great value. The practical guide is an excellent pocket book, useful for rapid consultation at patient’s bedside, since we usually need to consult about a medication, a dose, or a contraindication.

The compact disc is another example of the authors’ solidarity and didactic attitude; all their knowledge is shared with the medical community; it consists of a huge database, with more than 900 randomized clinical trials on the speciality, a software that allows to make all the usual calculations automatically when analyzing the final points of the clinical trials, and a computer-based epicrisis.

This fifth edition meets the authors’ expectations, since it has become an excellent tool for the physician’s ongoing training and refreshing. It leaves us with a clear message: let’s leave aside the security that absolute certainties offer; the challenge consists in facing the abyss of the unknown and in fighting against the stagnant truths, to question them and to create new worlds.