The Heart and the Mind

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This issue of *Psychiatric Annals* focuses on the interconnectedness of cardiology and psychiatry. The guest editor, Dr. Theodore A. Stern, has compiled an experienced team of professionals from both fields who have produced articles that speak to the current research and clinical practices.

The issue begins with the article, “Evidence-Based Treatment of Emotional Distress in Patients with Ischemic Coronary Heart Disease,” written by Drs. Mark W. Ketterer and Gregory Mahr; the article sets the tone for the entire issue by illustrating that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to reduce the rates of death from heart attacks compared to patients who have not received psychotherapy treatment.

The second article, “A Primer on Cardiac Devices: Psychological and Pharmacological Considerations,” by Drs. Chee Yuan Ng and Theofanie Mela primarily discusses how implantable cardiac devices may cause anxiety and depression. The authors also describe how CBT and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can help in patient outcome. This is followed by the article from Dr. Christopher M. Celano and colleagues entitled “Heart Failure: Psychological and Pharmacological Considerations,” which presents a useful discussion on the effects of SSRIs in chronic heart-related conditions.

The final article, “The Psychological and Pharmacological Correlations of Atrial Fibrillation,” by Drs. Ana Ivkovic and Judith Puckett emphasizes the frequency of anxiety and depressive disorders that occur in patients with atrial fibrillation (AF) and the value of treatment. Having suffered from AF during my right knee replacement surgery earlier this year, I was particularly interested in this topic. Fortunately, I have little to no awareness of the AF, but I do have to take blood anticoagulants and antiarrhythmic medications for the rest of my life. I must say that reading the information presented regarding survival rates in various cardiac illnesses eases my denial of potential remedies, and makes me focus on being alive.

This compilation of articles certainly brings home the importance of treating anxiety and depression disorders, which frequently accompany cardiac conditions.