



Review – “*Surgical cardiovascular disease*”

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There is no exaggeration in asserting that the publishing of the book “Surgical Cardiovascular Disease”, at the Medical Publishing House, under the coordination of Ion Socoteanu, famous cardiovascular surgeon, is the medical editorial event of 2007.

The editorial board consists in 65 authors from the 5 academic centers in Romania, all of them with a long tradition in the field of cardiovascular surgery. To them, we can also add the contribution of other specialists, of Romanian and foreign origins, who work in notorious surgical centers in Europe. They all provide the reader with the latest information, precise and falling into step with the remarkable progress in this medical specialty.

Professor Dr. Ion Socoteanu is the Head of the Surgical Cardiovascular Department, University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Victor Babes” and works at the Institute of Cardiovascular Disease Timisoara. Well-known to all

the Romanian physicians for decades for his prodigious professional activity, which started at the Fundeni Clinical Hospital in Bucharest and has been carried on in Timisoara, the name of Professor Dr. Ion Socoteanu is the warrant for professional integrity, passion for surgery and didactic activity.

The two volumes of this monumental work, totalizing up more than 2,200 pages in A4 format, are prefaced by names which are famous in the Romanian medical world. We can mention here Professor Dr. Pop de Popa and Professor Dr. Stefan Iosif Dragulescu, both highly appreciated and esteemed medical personalities, members of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Volume I opens with a generous chapter dedicated to the history of the evolution of cardiovascular surgery in the world and contains a large number of photographs of the pioneers of this spectacular medical specialty. The chapter is of interest mainly to the young

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physicians of the 3rd millennium, to whom a surgical intervention on an open heart is as common as an intervention on abdominal viscera. Photographs of the more than 60 years old surgery rooms fill in the information and introduce us to the atmosphere of the beginnings of cardiovascular surgery in the world. At the end of this chapter is told the history of the Romanian cardiovascular surgery, with emphasis on the forerunners, who are presented in exhaustive professional portraits. We have mainly appreciated the incursions in the medical history, present in almost all the chapters, because, in order to understand the achievements of this medical specialty, which culminate with the heart transplantation, you cannot ignore this spiral evolution followed by the pioneers in cardiovascular surgery.

As customary in such ample subject, the book presents, one by one, the chapters dealing with the particular aspects of cardiovascular surgery as part of general surgery, the characteristics of anesthesia for this type of intervention, outlining the specific features for anesthesia on children, and especially in congenital cardiopathies. Both the technique of cardioplegic induction and the extracorporeal circulation are largely discussed, giving details which are extremely helpful for the specialists who are part of the intervention team supporting the cardiovascular surgeons. After a few statistic considerations, which contain worldwide and national results, the authors pass to the substance of the book by a systematic presentation of the main chapters on surgical cardiovascular disease.

An up-to-date bibliography is added at the end of each chapter.

As it is expected, the first part deals with the congenital cardiac disease, a generous subject which is exhaustively covered. Chapter AII, 12, approaches a theme of great topicality, which has given birth to several discussions both among pediatric cardiologists and among cardiovascular surgeons for children. The topic is the present common international nomenclature of the congenital heart diseases, with reference to both diagnosis and treatment. The proposal of a unitary nomenclature has drawn the specialists' attention during the last 15 years. Those who have been most implied in this attempt are STS (Society of Thoracic Surgeons) and EACTS

(European Association of Cardio-Thoracic Surgery). AEPC (Association of European Pediatric Cardiologists) has been also interested in unifying and codifying the diagnosis and therapeutic options, trying to achieve a consensus which, after many joint efforts, was reached only in 2005. The nomenclature was drawn up by ISNCPHD (International Society for Nomenclature of Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease), headquartered in Canada. The volume “Surgical Cardiovascular Disease”, which is the subject of our presentation, is the first and unique Romanian work which presents these norms for diagnosis, treatment and surgical risk for each chapter dedicated to the congenital heart diseases, known under the name of IPCCC (International Pediatric and Congenital Cardiac Code).

Describing the local experience in solving surgically the congenital heart malformations, which require surgical intervention on newborns or infants, the authors admit the sad truth that, so far, there has not been any medical institution to deal with the disease of this age level. It has been sporadically and courageously approached only in some Romanian centers of cardiovascular surgery but these efforts do not resolve all the cases which might need these interventions. Neonatal cardiovascular surgery is an objective to be achieved only in the future by the teams of cardiac surgeons in our country. The setting-up of a hospital for children, with a special department for cardiovascular surgery for newborns and infants, seems to be the way to solve efficiently this public health problem.

At the end of the chapter on cardiovascular surgery on children, the authors also discuss the very sensible topic of heart transplantation on newborns and infants, an age level for which the problem of the donor is extremely critical, in spite of the fact that there are enough potential donors of organs.

The difference between palliation, repair, or surgical correction in the congenital heart diseases is discussed in Chapter AII, 44, by Professor Dr. Ion Socoteanu, the coordinator of this work himself. The interventional therapeutic procedures are given a separate presentation space and they are accompanied (faithful to the spirit of the book) by the unified nomenclature of the interventional therapeutic procedures (Op TIM II).

Before the end of the first volume, the authors approach the surgical cure of the acquired cardiac diseases and they begin with the valvular pathology. They discuss about diagnosis, surgical recommendation, valve replacement, valve types to be used, and possible complications to the patients with valvular prosthesis. The increasing number of the patients with valvular prosthesis amplifies the number of those who suffer from the undesirable effects of this corrective maneuvers.

The chapters which deal with the coronary surgery come at the end of Volume I and cover most part of Volume II. This section, too, contains the so much appreciated incursions in the history of medicine. The photographs and a short presentation of those who have written their names in the golden book of the world's cardiovascular surgery can be found in this volume, too. Homage is also paid to the cardiovascular surgeon Marian Ionescu, who started his career in Romania but, beginning with 1960, works in Leeds. Coronary disease and its solutions, with all they imply, heart transplantation included, cover the first part of Volume II.

The chapter “Heart Transplantation” is preceded by the presentation of Christiaan Barnard, the famous surgeon.

The last 500 pages of Volume II deal with the surgical arterial disease and neither here the Romanian nor the foreign pioneers of this medical specialty are forgotten. The authors approach the topic of diagnosis in peripheral arteriopathy, interventional therapy (percutaneous transluminal angioplasty), arterial reconstruction and by-pass surgery. Separate chapters are dedicated to the occlusive aorto-iliac disease,

occlusive infrainguinal disease, occlusive disease in type 1 diabetes and vascular traumatism.

The authors assigned separate chapters for the surgical venous vascular disease, pulmonary thromboembolism included. There is also a chapter on lymphatic vascular disease, the lymphedema included.

Volume II ends with the “Appendices” in which are presented the risk occurrences and other data of interest to the cardiovascular surgeon. Finally, there is an Index on topics.

The “Surgical Cardiovascular Disease” impresses through its exceptional graphic quality, the quality of the paper and of the illustrations, the amount of information, and, of course, through the value and quality of the content. It becomes a compulsory reading not only for cardiovascular surgeons but also for physicians of related medical specialties (internists, cardiologists, pediatricians, anaesthesists, surgeons from other areas of this medical specialty, persons interested in the history of cardiovascular surgery, young physicians in a dilemma when making their option for the future specialty). The book is exhaustive and proves balance, solid knowledge, modernism, actuality and much passion. We are grateful to Prof. Dr. Ion Socoteanu and his editorial board, who have provided us the pleasure of reading this work, which is not short of quotations from Plato and Socrates. Our positive appreciations will be supported by those who suffer and hope, patients of all ages and parents of sick children, who will be able to benefit, in the future, from the knowledge and progress of the modern technologies which allow the cardiovascular surgeons to solve medical problems considered fatal half a century ago.