Outcomes Research—Standardized Clinical Assessment and Management Plans

In the 4 years that we have published the journal *Congenital Heart Disease*, we have never had a special issue. I am happy to say that this first issue devoted to a single topic is indeed special. I have personally been so impressed by the work done at the Children’s Hospital of Boston under the leadership of Dr. Jim Lock that I felt we needed to devote an entire issue to that work. They have utilized a methodology called Standardized Clinical Assessment and Management Plans. Many of us in the field of congenital heart disease have attempted to use clinical practice guidelines. We all have become disillusioned with the lack of enough evidence-based data available in our field on which to build those guidelines, as well as the somewhat arbitrary nature of these guidelines in general. In addition, we all have continued to have difficulty in developing prospective randomized clinical trials.

As Senior Editor, that is why I am so excited to publish this special issue on a new, exciting, and innovative way to look at outcome data. Dr. Lock outlines in his forward the order of the material presented in this issue. I feel strongly that this is not only highly original and unique work, but that it is important for all of pediatrics and is applicable to other fields.

I’m also confident that other institutional leaders, having had an opportunity to read these papers collectively presented in one place, will perhaps begin similar efforts and provide a national or international collaborative to look at outcome data in a similar fashion. I thought it was important to have this data organized in one journal that could be used as a template throughout the world for this activity.

I want to thank Dr. Lock and his colleagues for allowing us to review this information and to publish it as the first special issue of *Congenital Heart Disease*. It truly is unique and exciting new information and a totally new way of doing things as it relates to clinical outcomes. It indeed is special.

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