



## PREFACE

With this, the third edition of *The Merck Manual of Geriatrics*, we continue the tradition of providing information of clinical relevance on geriatric care. Providing the best geriatric care requires an extraordinarily large base of information—everything from internal medicine to pharmacology and dermatology to rehabilitation medicine and psychiatry. However, it also requires a different approach to care than many other areas of medical practice, one that coordinates care among physicians, nurses, social workers, therapists, pharmacists, and myriad other health professionals. Geriatric care also requires education for patients and caregivers. Therefore, we have attempted to create a truly interdisciplinary textbook that reflects the optimal approach to geriatric care. We realize that not all of the information provided will be of interest to each reader; however, collectively it covers most of what needs to be known about caring for the elderly. Although this book is written primarily for clinicians, we hope that our expanded coverage will make this edition of *The Merck Manual of Geriatrics* even more useful to others involved in geriatric care, to older people, and to their families and friends.

This new edition of *The Merck Manual of Geriatrics* reflects the vast amount of new information that has been learned about geriatric care since our last edition, five years ago. Geriatrics and gerontology continue to be fertile ground for research. New treatments have already helped greatly to prevent, cure, or control conditions that as recently as five years ago were untreatable. We hope that by the next edition, even more of the devastating conditions of late life will be preventable or curable. When prevention, cure, or control cannot yet be achieved, we offer advice on palliation, including care of the dying, an area that we believe needs greater attention.

In creating the major revisions in this edition, we gratefully acknowledge the contributions provided by our distinguished editorial board who reviewed all chapters and the more than 150 experts who provided manuscripts and served as consultants. All of them share the hope that those who use this book will find it useful and, ultimately, of benefit to their patients.

We welcome your comments and will carefully consider all suggestions for improvement.

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