

# FOREWORD

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Change is always tumultuous, but healthy change can be constructive and innovative. This book, *Prognosis and Outcomes in Surgical Disease*, is representative of change that bodes well for medicine. It presents information in a format that is rapidly becoming adopted by many medical disciplines. Drs. Eiseman, McKellar, and Reiling focus on presenting evidence-based medicine and outcomes assessment as they apply to surgical diseases. This is not a new concept for Dr. Eiseman, as he states in his introduction. He pioneered this algorithmic approach in an earlier work that also emphasized outcomes but the concept was not widely embraced at the time.

Outcomes assessment is a popular convention in medicine today. This new medical term is really a redefinition of an old process. Although morbidity and mortality reporting are still basic, the end point is examined in greater depth. This process requires more exhaustive data than we had at our disposal in the past. The goal is to minimize variations in treatment and thereby select the most effective method to achieve the desired outcomes. We must now look beyond simple morbidity and mortality statistics. We also need to examine delivery systems of care and incorporate patient perceptions regarding outcomes as well as our own. Evidence-based medicine is the result of this type of analysis and we must reformulate our thinking accordingly.

The editors have shared with me some of their frustration as this book developed. It was often difficult for them and their contributors to think in terms of prognosis and outcomes rather than diagnosis and treatment. But once the authors embraced the concept, they were able to produce a unique educational tool that will undoubtedly set a new precedent. This textbook must be evaluated by a different standard. It is to be viewed as a supplement to other surgical texts and as an integral component of outcomes analysis. It marks a transition to a new and insightful approach to surgical decision making.

**John Weigelt, M.D.**

*Professor of Surgery,  
Medical College of Wisconsin,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*