Preface

Adjuncts for Care of the Surgical Patient

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Editor

Our specialty has a long history of managing patients with complex medical problems and multisystem traumatic injuries. Our population is aging and living longer, and as a result, patients are presenting with disease processes such as head and neck cancer, prostate and bladder conditions, central nervous system tumors/trauma, and cardiovascular problems that require varied medical and surgical interventions in their overall treatment.

This year marks the 32nd anniversary of the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. The Marines were in Beirut as part of a multinational peacekeeping force. A total of 241 Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers lost their lives. Included in that total were the majority of the medical assets assigned to the mission. Only a few US Navy Dental Corps personnel were left to manage the casualties. For those of us who are serving or have served in the military, geopolitical conflicts are becoming more commonplace with a less than clear frontline. Today, we live in an uncertain world, and terrorism is no longer something that occurs in other countries. Terrorist events here in the United States, including the bombing of the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City Federal Building, the events of September 11, 2001, and most recently, the attack during the Boston Marathon, have occurred with an impact on health care systems in each locale. It is conceivable that mass casualty events could take shape in the form of chemical and/or bioterrorist acts as well as explosive/combustible-type acts potentially requiring an unprecedented response from health care.

In this issue of the Atlas of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinics of North America, multiple adjunctive surgical techniques are presented, including management of the airway, GI tract, and urinary tract; monitoring and treatment options for hemodynamic instability and volume replacement; management of life-threatening thoracic injuries and cardiothoracic surgical intervention; evaluation and monitoring of the central nervous system; and evaluation of the abdomen. We never know how our unique skills spanning a range of medical, surgical, and dental training will be called into use. It is for this reason that I am grateful to the contributing authors for their time and for sharing their expertise on a range of adjunctive techniques that we as oral and maxillofacial surgeons should be familiar with in the management of multisystem trauma and complex medical patients.

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