Heart failure is effectively a disease of older people. Eighty percent of patients are over 65 years old, and the majority of these are over 75. This figure is likely to increase significantly in the next two decades. The prognosis is worse than that of most cancers and heart failure is the commonest reason for hospital admission in the over 65s.

The problems associated with treating heart failure in older patients are more diverse and complex than in those who are younger. The diagnosis in older patients is easily overlooked and as they were excluded from most heart failure treatment trials there has been a reluctance to treat them optimally (fewer than 20% are prescribed conventional medicines). They have multiple co-morbidities which are poorly managed, they are repeatedly hospitalised, and suffer social isolation.

These important age-related treatment and management problems have been largely ignored and this book aims to redress the balance. It provides a concise, comprehensive account of the epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, treatment, management and end-of-life care of elderly patients with heart failure, based on published studies.

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