



Dear Colleague:

THIS ISSUE of the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* features articles on topics that present common challenges to the clinician in terms of both diagnosis and management, especially in this era of concern about cost. We also have an article that discusses a common problem for clinicians, how to approach the patient who is taking an herbal medicine.

■ Herbal medicine: What your patient is taking (page 129)

One of the most commonly used unconventional approaches to medical treatment is herbal medicines. Dr. Vann provides a nice review of this fascinating field, mentioning some of the most frequently used preparations and how physicians should regard them.

■ Mildly elevated liver enzymes (page 150)

Abnormal laboratory tests in seemingly healthy individuals can be perplexing to the clinician, and liver enzyme abnormalities are a particularly common version of this problem. Dr. Younossi discusses a systematic approach to this situation, focusing on the indications for liver biopsy.

■ Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (page 142)

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder, a particularly unpleasant version of premenstrual syndrome, may affect as many as one in 20 women of reproductive age. Drs. Muzina and Gonsalves review the manifestations, possible causes, and approaches to treating this condition.

■ Thyroid function tests (page 123)

The Drs. Faiman explore and clarify the mysteries of the thyroid gland, its secretions, and related hormones and binding proteins in their IM Board Review article.

■ Managing patients on amiodarone (page 159)

Amiodarone is a potent antiarrhythmic drug, which is being used more often for a variety of conditions. Drs. Murphy and Wilkoff provide a brief update on the current indications and contraindications for amiodarone, and outline a plan for internists caring for patients who are being treated with the drug.

■ Wegener's granulomatosis (page 135)

The recognition that antibodies against cytoplasmic antigens of neutrophils (ANCA) are a marker for Wegener's granulomatosis was an important advance in managing this unusual form of vasculitis. Dr. Langford discusses the role of testing for this antibody, putting it into perspective with the other available diagnostic methods.

As always we are interested what you think of the *Journal*, and your ideas for future topics.

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