

# Preface

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In medical school, I had learned that platelets were just passive participants in blood clot formation; other more important constituents of blood were the really key players in thrombosis and platelets were just “along for the ride.” As the science of platelets evolved, it became clear that platelets were active mediators of thrombus formation, central in the pathogenesis of acute ischemic syndromes, including heart attacks and strokes.

More recently, the roles of platelets as immune cells and active biosynthetic factories, churning out all sorts of biological mediators, have become evident. Thus, the platelet has morphed into a truly critical part of cardiovascular medicine, as have therapies directed toward inhibiting platelet function.

I am extremely grateful to the chapter authors of this book, experts in not only the science of platelets, but also in clinical cardiovascular care. They have summarized the key aspects of platelet biology and anti-platelet therapies in a manner that should be of great interest and practical utility to health care providers as well as scientists in the field. I am also thankful to the Imperial College Press for their guidance in preparing what I hope readers will discover to be an exciting view of the past, present, and future of platelets and anti-platelet therapy.

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