Preface

Few fields of medicine have changed as rapidly as that of hepatology in the past fifteen to twenty years. However, the management of coagulation disorders, an inherent aspect of all types of progressive liver failure, seemed to lag behind other areas for a long time and has remained mired in old dogma and unproven practice guidelines often guided more by legal concerns than by scientific evidence or rational reason. This situation has now changed dramatically over the past several years, with a number of welcome advances ushered in by landmark papers from Tripodi and colleagues, the development of new therapeutics and with it the improved understanding of normal hemostasis. Additional refinements in diagnostic tests have been greatly advanced by the pioneering work of Burroughs and colleagues. These advances have led to the appreciation of the multifaceted aspects of coagulation disorders in liver disease from hypo-coagulable to hyper-coagulable states and the limitations of conventional tests, such as the INR, to shed light on relative bleeding risk or on underlying pathophysiology in a given patient.

In this issue of Clinics in Liver Disease, we are very happy to present a collection of original articles from leaders in the field, and from multiple disciplines, from around the world. Each article discusses the state of the art along with its limitations. Our aim is to shed light on recent advances and to explore areas of controversy and, thus, the need for combined clinical and laboratory investigation. We hope this issue will stimulate further research on this important issue in liver diseases.

Stephen H. Caldwell, MD
GI/Hepatology Division
Digestive Health Center of Excellence
University of Virginia Medical Center
Box 800708, Charlottesville, VA 22908-0708

Arun J. Sanyal, MD
Division of GI/Hepatology and Nutrition
Department of Internal Medicine
VCU School of Medicine
MCV Box 980341, Richmond VA 23298-0341

E-mail addresses:  
shc5c@virginia.edu (S.H. Caldwell)  
asanyal@mcvh-vcu.edu (A.J. Sanyal)