Preface

The art and science of medicine is evolving along with technology. This has led to the discovery of a vast amount of new therapies. Unequivocally, an immense amount of research should ideally be performed prior to the approval of these new therapies to ensure safety and tolerability along with the efficacy of these compounds. Unfortunately there have been several cases in which liver toxicity is identified sooner or later. These observations lead to the conclusion that drugs, herbal, and alternative treatment–induced liver toxicity is one of the major public health issues around the world. This is an important cause of morbidity and mortality following the aforementioned agents taken even in therapeutic doses. This has led to the withdrawal of a substantial number of medications not only prior to their approval but even after the approval of the compound, or with an inclusion of a “black box warning.” It is of great concern that patients with evidence of drug, herbal, and alternative compound–induced hepatotoxicity may present a wide spectrum of symptomatology. Findings range from an asymptomatic increase of the liver enzymes up to and including fulminant hepatic failure requiring liver transplantation.

In this issue of Clinics in Liver Disease, distinguished scientists and experts in this field share their findings and experiences of their scientific work, formulating a thorough comprehensive review on the most important and timely topics in drug hepatotoxicity. A full span of very basic articles that discusses drug metabolism, drug-induced cholestasis, and pathological manifestations of drug-induced hepatotoxicity as well as other important articles devoted to clinical, epidemiologic, and therapeutic interventions such as drug-induced acute liver failure are included. Herbal, complementary, and alternative medicine-induced liver injury is a worldwide issue as the potential misconception that this kind of treatment is “benign as it comes from mother earth.”

I would like to express my appreciation to the authors of these articles who devoted much of their time to review the literature and publish their own experience on this very
important topic. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr Norman Gitlin and Ms Kerry Holland for giving me the opportunity to edit this issue.

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