

PREFACE

There is an ever increasing number of those amongst us who are in their second or even third stage of life due to both the rapidly changing age structure, particularly in the western world, and altered living conditions. Hence this calls for a critical analysis of this phase of life in many areas, especially including the sectors of preventive health care and medicine. New discoveries evolving from medical research, continual better knowledge and understanding of hormonal control mechanisms and also taking into account the opportunities offered by hormone replacement therapy in compensating for deficiency symptoms, slowing down the ageing process and thus also facilitating the quality of life in later years, open up important and at the same time fascinating prospects resulting in a tangible progress for mankind, particularly so for women in their third stage of life. Endocrinology also appears to be making its mark on gynaecology. Many disorders are now being diagnosed and can be increasingly better treated due to our increased understanding of hormonal interrelations.

Nevertheless, it has almost been taken for granted that until now the social status of women and their state of health has received a considerable amount of attention, whilst at the same time health issues concerning men have been neglected. These have only more recently moved into the focal point and have now become much more the subject of a wider public and comprehensive debate. There is a higher rate of morbidity and mortality amongst men than women and even the life expectancy of men is significantly

lower than that of women in almost all parts of the world. Modern research points increasingly to differences between genders (gender specificity) in the progression of disease and our behaviour towards disease, but also its acceptance in society and how we deal with it.

This book provides an overview of the latest findings with respect to the manifold problems beginning with the menopause and osteoporosis from a psychological viewpoint and culminating in the most recent approaches to treatment. In addition this book discusses the latest findings about the ageing male, its causes, ways of maintaining his vitality and health, even until a high age. In individual chapters, the most well known authorities from different countries, mostly from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, but also from non-German speaking countries have addressed these issues on an interdisciplinary basis and have presented the latest research results. It is intended to comprehensively highlight the wide-ranging problems in this particular field, and ways of approaching and treating them, to interested colleagues of all medical disciplines, and also to the interested general practitioner.

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