

## GUEST EDITORIAL

In the middle of the 18th century, M. Lieutaud, the Physician of the Dauphin and of the Children of France, commented on cardiovascular diseases and applauded the value of visual and tactile observations. Of course, in those days learned and precise observation was the physician's only tool for making a diagnosis. In 1816, Rene Laennec invented the stethoscope, a simple instrument indeed, and revolutionized for generations the practice of medicine with respect to the heart and the lungs.

It is interesting to remember how this discovery came about. History tells us that one day, Laennec was walking in the courtyard of the Louvre while on his way to his hospital to see an overweight female heart patient when he saw children transmitting acoustic messages to each other by banging on a wooden beam abandoned by the workers repairing the palace. This gave Laennec the inspiration to roll sheets of paper and use them as an acoustic cornet to listen to the heart sounds of his patient, sounds which were otherwise muffled by her voluminous breasts! This led to the development of acoustic cylinders made of paper and then of wood by Laennec's students. The device was named the stethoscope—from the Greek root meaning “je vois dans la poitrine.” (I see

into the chest.) Admittedly, it is difficult to verify this report, but it certainly makes an interesting story.

Today, one hundred and fifty years later, we can marvel at another development which, at this time, really permits us to see into the chest! Magnetic resonance imaging is a magnificent tool that will again revolutionize the medicine of the heart. Indeed, not only is it becoming the method for diagnosing clinically overt pathology, but many believe—and I am one of them—that it will allow subclinical diagnoses and, thus, will have a remarkable public health impact.

The full potential of this approach, however, will largely depend on its acceptance by the practicing community. To this end, one can safely predict that this new Journal will play a major role in bringing magnetic resonance imaging into the practice of medicine.

The Editor, Gerald M. Pohost, the editorial board, and all those who will contribute to the *Journal of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance* will undoubtedly help physicians to “see into the chest” and also to diagnose precisely its ailments.

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