Preface

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Editor

I am pleased to present this *Thoracic Surgery Clinics* dedicated to myasthenia gravis (MG) and thymectomy. The recent international prospectively randomized trial of thymectomy for MG (MGTX trial) has finally proven the effectiveness of thymectomy in nonthymomatous MG. The historical road to enable definitive proof of the role and effectiveness of thymectomy was led by many surgical leaders and thoracic surgical legends. We should be particularly indebted to Dr Fred Jaretzki, whose surgical leadership enabled the randomized international trial to come to fruition. The positive results of the trial, combined with the now many minimally invasive techniques to perform a thymectomy, should lead to a much wider acceptance and utilization of thymectomy in MG.

However, many unanswered questions remain in the treatment of this diverse population of patients, and early complete cure of this autoimmune disease remains elusive. Future progress and trials working toward maximizing the cure and treatment of these patients will need to be led by the next generation of thoracic surgeons. Understanding the immunologic role of the thymus, the current medical approach to the treatment of myasthenic patients, as well as the historical perspective of how we arrived at our current state of knowledge will be the key to the next developmental steps and progress toward cure.

I am blessed and grateful to have had so many leaders and experts in the field contribute to this

issue of *Thoracic Surgery Clinics*. Each article was written by prominent respected physicians in the fields of immunology, neurology, and surgery. Given the many unanswered questions that remain in the treatment of MG, I urge you to carefully read each article in order to gain the unique perspective of each of the authors. Understanding the immunologic function and maturation of the thymus is clearly essential in truly making progress in treating this disease, and surgeons must be fully cognizant of these concepts in order to effectively integrate treatment in a multidisciplinary approach. Collaboration with our colleagues in neurology is essential to current treatment algorithms and future studies to improve outcomes in this disease. Finally, several surgical approaches are presented by surgeon champions of those techniques, offering valuable lessons regardless of one's personal bias.

I hope you enjoy reading these thoughtful articles as much as I did.

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