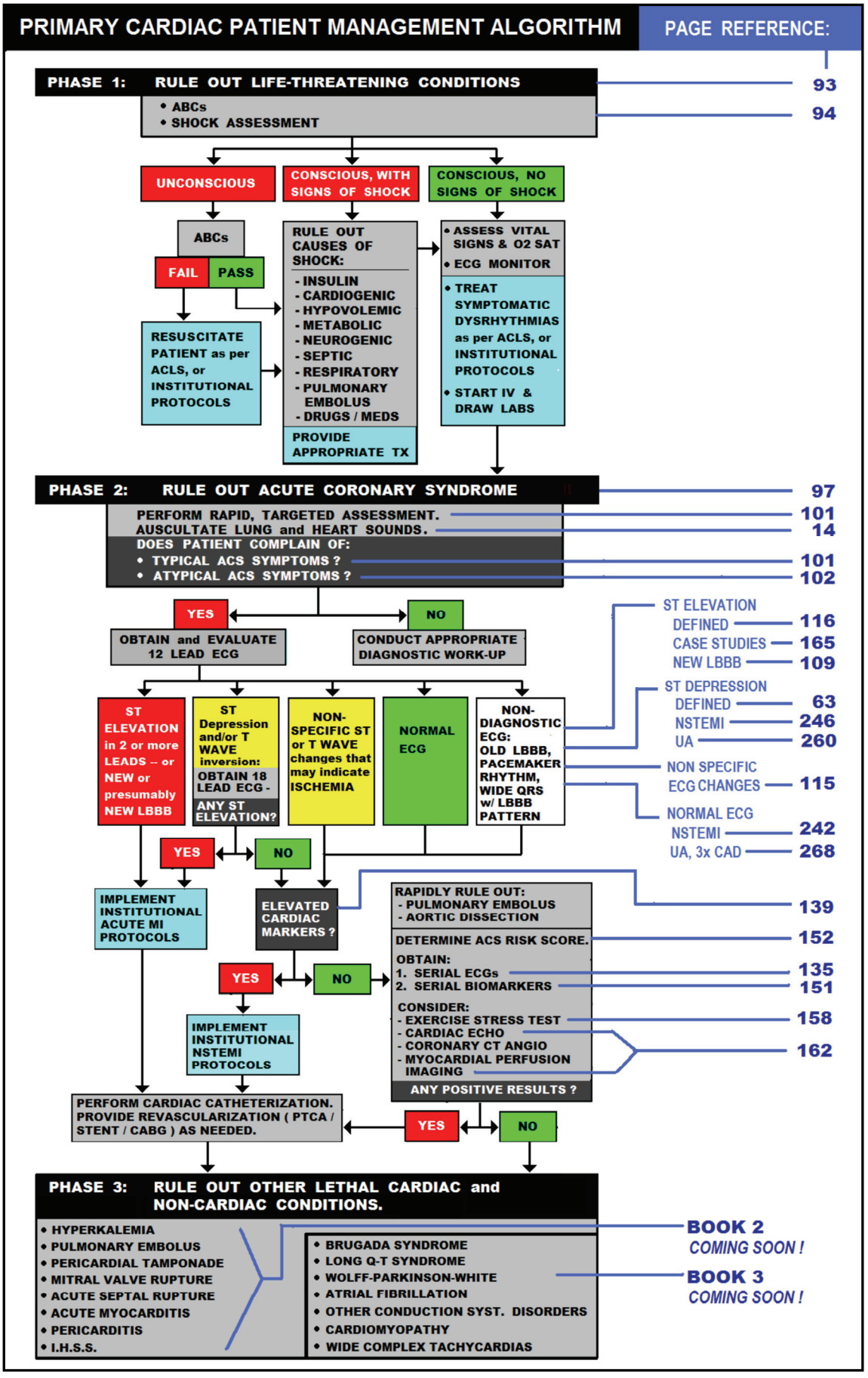

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Patient Management is the act of coordinating and overseeing all aspects of *patient evaluation, diagnosis*, and *treatment.* In the "big picture" of patient management, the 12 LEAD ECG often provides a *key piece of the diagnostic puzzle,* aiding us in rapidly diagnosing potentially life-threatening disorders.

The main focus of this book is teaching clinicians to assimilate the data obtained from the 12 LEAD ECG with *other pertinent assessment information* in order to intelligently determine the next appropriate step(s) to be taken in the continuum of providing patient care.

There are three major objectives we must meet in order to accomplish this. We must educate medical professionals to routinely:

1. **Collect and analyze data from *multiple sources* to maximize accuracy in diagnosing potentially life-threatening cardiac disorders**. Due to problems with *sensitivity* and *specificity*, the ECG frequently provides misleading diagnostic information. Therefore we can not rely solely on the ECG to make accurate diagnostic decisions. We must assimilate data from the patient's *verbal history, physical exam, lab tests*, and *risk factor profile* – in conjunction with the ECG – in order to provide a maximum level of diagnostic accuracy.

2. **Recognize abnormal ECG patterns which are consistent with specific cardiac disorders.** Through the use of actual case studies, we review pertinent ECG abnormalities and pathophysiologies which are associated with Acute Coronary Syndrome. Every case study is followed through the Cardiac Catheterization and/or Electrophysiology (EP) Labs, where the true diagnosis is obtained. With this information, we *validate* or *re-qualify traditional ECG diagnoses, provide case summaries* and *highlight key teaching points.*

3. **Use an Algorithmic approach to patient evaluation.** Algorithms facilitate *accuracy, speed*, and *consistency* in the assessment and treatment of abnormal medical conditions. They provide *structure and organization to complex, dynamic scenarios, keep our minds focused on appropriate priorities*, and *channel our actions to be consistent with accepted diagnostic and therapeutic practices.*

☞ A medical team leader's *patient management skills* are of equal importance to patient outcome as are the skills of *patient assessment* and *treatment.* Patient management is the "putting it all together" aspect of patient care. Requisites for successful patient management include:

- *Knowledge of which diagnostic modalities and therapeutic interventions are necessary,*
- The *ability to prioritize the appropriate order of events*
- The ability to accept input from other team members and integrate appropriate suggestions into the care plan
- The ability to effectively coordinate the actions of team members
- the *ability to rapidly make changes "mid-stream," when the patient's condition changes.*

The Primary Patient Management Algorithm shown on the next page serves as the "central nervous system" for coordinating all patient care activities described in this book, in chronological order, which include:

- ***patient evaluation,***
- ***clinical decision making***
- ***implementation of therapeutic interventions***

We suggest you become familiar with this algorithm, as it serves as the "main blueprint" for this curriculum, as well as Book 2 and Book 3 of this series (listed at bottom of algorithm, next page).

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