Symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a highly prevalent condition affecting a significant proportion of the population, as well as representing the majority of GERD patients. With this in mind, a roundtable of experts from Europe and the United States convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to discuss the various aspects of this disease. It is with pleasure that I present the proceedings of this roundtable.

The presenters generally define the term symptomatic GERD as patients with GERD symptoms but without endoscopic evidence of disease, sometimes referred to as non-erosive reflux disease or endoscopy-negative reflux disease. However, because of the lack of endoscopic data for patients in some studies, some presenters also include patients with uninvestigated GERD under the symptomatic GERD umbrella. Once considered a mild or initial form of GERD, evidence suggests that symptomatic GERD is a separate condition, distinct from erosive esophagitis in its epidemiology and pathophysiology. With the lack of esophageal erosions, symptomatic GERD may be more difficult to diagnose, and improvement in symptoms and quality of life become the only means of measuring treatment success. Furthermore, several studies have shown that treatment of symptomatic GERD also can present a challenge to clinicians. As with erosive esophagitis, proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) currently are considered to be the treatment of choice for managing symptomatic GERD, but discussion continues regarding which PPI, dosage level, or treatment regimen is the most effective option. As a result, the information presented in this supplement includes various aspects of PPI therapy, including rapidity of and overall symptom relief, improvement of quality of life, use in intermittent and on-demand treatment regimens, and pharmacoeconomic impact.

In the articles that follow, the epidemiology and diagnosis of symptomatic GERD and current treatment strategies for this condition are discussed in depth. My colleagues and I hope that through this discussion, symptomatic GERD gains greater recognition in the medical community, so more patients with this troublesome disease are identified and treated appropriately.