

Introduction

As you go through this pocket guide you will follow the accounts of five patients who are typical of subjects attending a practice/healthcare centre in a multi-cultural society in South Africa. Each patient's case history is used to illustrate what is to be learnt from that particular chapter, and challenges the reader to think about the multiple origins and diverse backgrounds of patients at risk for or with heart failure in South Africa and other regions in Africa.

Treatment guidelines provided are based on the latest guidelines of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) (2005) and are modified where appropriate for local circumstances by our panel of experts. In your practice, you may need to follow the standards set by funders, or by peer-review systems at your institution and also of course, your insights as to the individual patient's needs. This pocket guide cannot replace your clinical acumen but seeks to provide support and insight for your guidance on best practice.