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## Preface

In terms of hardware and software development, magnetic resonance imaging is still subject to rapid change. For this reason the procedure is undergoing considerable improvement and refinement. The radiologist must accept this development process and ensure that improvements are quickly incorporated into routine. These include the use of new sequences, verification of examination records, and a refinement of diagnostic interpretation, which is frequently necessary as a result. Owing to an increase in resolution and the use of sequences with enhanced contrast-to-noise ratio, such as the STIR sequence, diagnostic significance is now considerably higher than it was 6 to 7 years ago. Anyone who in the light of such aspects is unable or unwilling to learn will soon lose touch.

The necessity of continuous learning remains, and books are an important aid in this process. Furthermore, constant updating is absolutely essential, which was the reason behind publishing this book. It demonstrates impressively how quickly examination technology and the diagnostic significance of the procedure have changed for the vertebral column and spinal canal over the last few years.

A number of authors have cooperated in writing this book. The aim was to engage particularly well-qualified colleagues for the various sections of the chapters. The editor hopes that this has proven successful.

One or two readers may be surprised to see that a book about the vertebral column and spinal canal region has reached such a length. Admittedly, I did not expect it either. However, if one takes a look at the various sections within the chapters, one will realize that nothing is of undue length.

Apart from those contributors whose are named on the front of the book, there are others who have also made a contribution, in some cases a very important one that was necessary to ensure the success of the book. In this connection I would like to particularly express my gratitude to those who have contributed to rounding off the chapters by providing illustrations. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Carlos Hartung in Rheine who had set aside some interesting illustrative examples for me beforehand, because he knew that I would approach him. I would also like to take the opportunity of expressing my sincere gratitude to Dr. Heinen from the St. Johannes-Hospital in Arnsberg.

Last but not least I would like to say a sincere thank-you to the members of staff at Thieme publisher's. I hope that the book will be well received and that colleagues entrusted with interpreting magnetic resonance images will enjoy using it.

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Detlev Uhlenbrock

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