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NEWS

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COFFMAN AUTHORS NEW BOOK ON THE CAUSES AND TREATMENT OF RAYNAUD'S DISEASE

Boston, Mass.--Many young women are particularly susceptible to cold temperatures. While some may experience only mild discomfort in the cold, those who suffer from Raynaud's phenomenon--a common medical condition affecting five to 20 percent of young women--have episodes in which their fingers and toes turn white or blue and become numb when exposed to the cold.

Raynaud's Phenomenon, the first book written on this condition, offers a comprehensive assessment of the causes, diagnosis and treatment of this disease. The book was written by Jay D. Coffman, M.D., a professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM), the section head of the Peripheral Vascular Department at The University Hospital (UH) and the associate director of Medical Services at UH. The book is based on Coffman's 30 years of experience in the specialty of peripheral vascular disease with a special emphasis on Raynaud's phenomenon.

Although there is no known cause, Raynaud's disease is normally a benign and easily treatable disease. However, when it is due to an underlying disease or problem, known as a secondary phenomenon, ulcers and gangrene may occur. In his book, Coffman discusses the various factors that can influence the onset of Raynaud's disease. He discusses the anatomy and physiology of finger circulation; the prevalence, prognosis, pathophysiology and diagnosis of primary Raynaud's phenomenon; and the secondary diseases that cause Raynaud's phenomenon.

"The primary aim of this book is to collect in one place the present understanding of primary Raynaud's disease and the secondary phenomenon. It is a useful book for physicians," says Coffman.

Coffman points out that an extensive number of secondary causes, including

drug therapy, connective tissue diseases, traumatic vasospastic disease, carpal tunnel syndrome and thoracic outlet syndromes, can cause Raynaud's phenomenon.

Calcium-entry blocking agents and drugs that inhibit the sympathetic nervous system are the most beneficial form of treatment. Behavioral treatment and conditioning have also been successful in a number of patients.

Coffman received his bachelor's degree from Harvard College and his medical degree from BUSM. In addition to his various roles at BUSM and UH, he is a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the American Heart Association.

Boston University School of Medicine is located in the South End of Boston adjacent to two of its principal teaching hospitals, The University Hospital and Boston City Hospital.