Pathophysiological significance and clinical utility of circulating osteoprotegerin
A. Dovio, V. Data, A. Angeli

Osteoprotegerin (OPG) belongs to the tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily and acts as a decoy receptor for the RANK ligand (RANKL), preventing its binding to RANK. Specific anti-OPG antibodies have been developed, allowing for the measurement of circulating OPG and, more recently, of soluble RANKL, often yielding unexpected results. The aim of this paper is to summarize the available data on circulating OPG levels in a number of conditions; the pathophysiological significance and potential clinical utility will be emphasized.

Liver transplantation
M. Pompili, V.G. Mirante, G.L. Rapaccini, G. Gasbarrini

In this study the authors have evaluated the main problems concerning liver transplantation such as the staging methods, the indications and contraindications to the procedure, immunosuppressive treatment, acute and chronic rejection, the surgical, infectious, cardiovascular, and metabolic complications, and the post-transplantation survival rates.

High-protein diets and obesity
L.M. Donini, A. Pinto, C. Cannella

The authors analyze the problems related to the use of high-protein diets in the treatment of obesity. Caution is recommended in view of their only slight effect on weight and fat loss and on satiety and energy intake and owing to the risks of harmful outcomes. Moreover, these diets do not allow patients to adopt adequate nutritional behavior rules.

Relationship between the obstructive sleep apnea syndrome and internal medicine
A. Perrone, L. Sperduti, C. Magliocco, C. Marchini, V. Masciangelo, A. Barbarossa, M. Brunori, G. Germanò

The frequency of systemic diseases (hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and obesity) is increased among patients with the obstructive sleep apnea syndrome. The improvement in the sleep-related breathing disorder after ventilatory therapy was associated with an improvement in chronic diseases, suggesting the need of a deeper consideration and comprehension of nocturnal apneas.

Idiopathic retroperitoneal fibrosis: a case report without increased levels of acute-phase reactants. Noninvasive diagnosis and treatment
A. Artom, N. Gandolfo

The authors report a case of benign idiopathic retroperitoneal fibrosis in a 39-year-old male, successfully treated with immunosuppressive drugs. The new diagnostic instruments, especially magnetic resonance imaging, allow us to avoid the surgical biopsy of the newly formed retroperitoneal tissue, as in the case described. The follow-up of the patient with magnetic resonance imaging is able to confirm successfully the remission phase of the disease, which often can be obtained only with medical treatment.

Adult idiopathic subglottic stenosis: a diagnostic and therapeutic challenge
G. Garini, L. Fecci, R. Giacosa, A. Vaglio

A case of adult idiopathic subglottic stenosis is reported. The patient presented with effort dyspnea, harsh respiratory sounds in the tracheal area, an obstructive ventilatory defect, and a flattening of the flow-volume loops. Bronchoscopy and tracheal tomography revealed a subglottic stenosis, which was managed by means of endobronchial laser therapy.

Pulmonary sarcoidosis during interferon therapy: a rare or underestimated event?
A. Salvio, M. Mormile, F. Giannattasio, M. Varriale, T. d’Errico, B. Balzano, P. Carratù, G. Tufano, M. Visconti

Few cases of sarcoidosis during interferon therapy have so far been reported. The interferons have been proven to be capable of starting the cascade of events that lead to the onset of sarcoidosis. The authors describe a case of pulmonary sarcoidosis in a patient on interferon therapy for active chronic HCV-related hepatitis (underestimated event?).