

Childhood Asthma. Stanley J Szeffler and Søren Pedersen, editors. *Lung Biology in Health and Disease* series, volume 209, Claude Lenfant, executive editor. Boca Raton, Florida: Informa/Taylor & Francis. 2006. Hard cover, illustrated, 703 pages, \$199.95.

This is the 209th installment in the *Lung Biology in Health and Disease* series, and it lives up to its predecessors' excellent reputation. The book has 26 chapters and 4 parts: natural history of asthma; altering the course of asthma; advancing technology; and management principles. The book serves as an up-to-date reference on pediatric asthma. As I reviewed this book, I looked for up-to-date evidence-based reviews; readability; inclusion of practical information where appropriate; and inclusion of appropriate tables, graphs, and figures for easy reference.

The book opens with an overview of the epidemiology of pediatric asthma, by Stempel. It discusses agents that may influence epidemiologic differences—including incidence, mortality, and morbidity—among countries. The following chapter, by Prescott and Holt, discusses developmental regulation of immune functions and the risk of allergy and asthma. This is an excellent review of perinatal immune regulation and responses to allergens.

Chapter 3, by Warner, concerns the origins of asthma, the relationship between atopy and asthma, genetic considerations, lung embryology, fetal programming, and airway remodeling. The discussion on airway remodeling is greatly expanded in the fourth chapter, by Tulic, Bergeron, Daigneault, and Hamid. Chapter 5, by Covar and Spahn, discusses numerous clinically relevant questions on the natural history of asthma in children and adults, and is well supported by graphs and tables. Chapter 6, by Allen, continues the clinical focus, with an excellent discussion of asthma's (and asthma treatment's) effects on children's growth and development. This chapter would benefit from more graphs.

Part 2 concerns altering the course of asthma; it includes chapters on viral respiratory infections and asthma (by Gern and Lamanske), controlling the environment of asthmatic children (by Apter and Eggleston), and early pharmacologic intervention for asthma (by Pedersen). The chapters on viral infection and environmental control offer good reviews of the current literature, but

both would benefit from some data tables and/or illustrations. The chapter on early pharmacologic intervention is an excellent review, and is chock full of data figures.

Part 3 contains chapters on measuring pulmonary function in young children (by Morgan, Guilbert, and Larsen), inflammatory mediators of asthma in children (by Gibson and Simpson), imaging in pediatric asthma (by Altes and Brody), and pharmacogenetics (by Weiss, Tantisira, Silverman, Silverman, Lake, Richter, and Lazarus). The first chapter provides an academic summary of various techniques for measuring lung function in children, but it fails to provide practical information on how to use these techniques. The chapter on inflammatory mediators provides concise and practical coverage of sputum eosinophils, exhaled nitric oxide, and exhaled-breath condensates, as does the chapter on imaging, with regard to conventional radiographs, computed tomography, and hyperpolarized gas magnetic resonance imaging. Finally, the pharmacogenetics chapter provides a good review of the available data in an easy-to-read format.

The second half of the book contains 13 chapters on asthma management. The chapter on asthma education (by Paton) is both practical and evidence-based, and is an excellent read. It does not provide cookie-cutter educational materials, but it does provide information necessary to develop an effective education program. The chapter on evolving guidelines (by Becker) gives a nice review of the various guidelines and recent longitudinal studies in pediatric asthma. The chapter on medication delivery (by Dolovich) offers extensive coverage of delivery devices. It's a shame that the section on fitting face masks didn't include instructions to be sure that the face mask isn't too long for the patient's face. The chapter on variable response to asthma therapy (by Zeffler and Whelan) is excellent; it covers basic asthma management per guidelines, genetic variability in the β receptor, leukotriene synthesis, glucocorticoid receptor, nitric oxide synthase, tumor necrosis factor alpha, and nuclear factor kappa B.

Another excellent and thorough chapter is the one on allergen-specific immunotherapy (by Liu and Nelson). The chapter on inner-city asthma (by Kattan) was adequate, but I was disappointed to see only 4 sentences on the interaction of genetic and environmental factors. Asthma in adolescence (by Strunk, Bacharier, and Bloomberg) is an excellent review of the related literature,

but it would have benefited from some data figures. The chapter on exercise-induced asthma in the competitive athlete (by Milgrom) and the one on comorbid illnesses (by Shapiro) are both excellent and practical; they include appropriate graphs, figures, and tables to encapsulate the important points. The chapter on improving asthma adherence (by Bender, Wamboldt, and Rand) is complete enough but would have benefited from data graphs or tables. Barnes's chapter on potential applications of new drugs was superb and quite complete. The chapter on difficult-to-control asthma (by Price) and the (final) chapter on management in the next 10 years (by Szeffler and Pedersen) were adequate, but I was surprised to see a dearth of discussion on potential genetic influences in the former.

In summary, this is an excellent reference book on pediatric asthma. The references are extensive. Most chapters are excellent, and none were poor. The book is appropriate for practicing physicians, academic physicians, and physicians in training.

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Sarcoidosis. Robert P Baughman, editor. *Lung Biology in Health and Disease* series, volume 210, Claude Lenfant, executive editor. Boca Raton, Florida: Informa/Taylor & Francis. 2006. Hard cover, illustrated, 813 pages, \$199.95.

This book brings together the expertise of 65 distinguished clinicians and scientists from around the world. It aims to give a concise overview of current knowledge about sarcoidosis, the precise etiology of which remains unknown. Although the book is "aimed at the casual reader looking for specific information on various aspects of the illness," it is also a detailed source of further reading. The book has 813 pages, and it is volume 210 in this well-recognized series of international reviews. The print size and presentation is very clear, and I saw only occasional typographical errors.

The editorial standardization of the chapters' content and presentation is excellent, which makes it very easy to read either throughout or by individual section.