

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.

After a chapter on the history of sarcoidosis, the book is divided into 9 parts: epidemiology; immune responses; genetic factors; the role of infection; the development of other granulomas in the differential diagnosis; patient evaluation and pathology; specific organ involvement; treatment; and speculation about etiology and possible new treatments.

The historical section gives a fascinating insight into the early descriptions of the disease and the many famous clinicians who have been involved around the world. The chapters on epidemiology give a comprehensive overview of current knowledge and highlight the important geographical and ethnic variations of sarcoidosis in different areas. These chapters are appropriately referenced. The sections on granuloma formation are clearly and concisely written and will be understandable, I think, even to non-experts. The important role of the pulmonary lymphatic system is emphasized. Other complex immunological factors are also reviewed in a clear and understandable way and well referenced, including references on the role of antigen presenting cells, cytokines, and chemokines. There is also an important chapter on the Kveim-Siltzbach skin test, which gives an important overview and detailed insight into this previously essential diagnostic test. Its development, preparation, standardization, and application are thoroughly reviewed. The histopathology of the resulting biopsy is set out in detail. Recent research and its possible future use in the understanding of granulomagenesis are reviewed. That the Kveim-Siltzbach skin test is now rarely used in day-to-day clinical practice, because newer diagnostic techniques have superseded it, is appropriately emphasized.

Part III covers the genetic aspects of sarcoidosis, which is an important subject, with major clinical and research implications. Modern methods of gene location and their role in understanding the etiology of sarcoidosis and its many variable patterns of presentation are extensively discussed and referenced. The search for potential pathogens (covered in Part IV) has always been at the heart of sarcoidosis research. As yet no single agent has been identified, but these chapters comprehensively set out our current knowledge. Part V covers the development of other granulomas, which are important in the differential diagnosis.

Part VI describes the clinical evaluation of patients with sarcoidosis. This is covered

in detail, with useful tables that will help clinicians faced with a possible new diagnosis. The diagnostic studies discussed include radiology (extensively referenced) and newer techniques, including bronchoalveolar lavage for diagnosis, prognosis, response to therapy, and research. The role of pulmonary function testing is concisely reviewed, including the assessment of abnormalities of the diffusing factor. No mention is made of the use of oxygen saturation for routine monitoring in the out-patient clinic and its further evaluation by simple exercise testing. The important subject of quality of life assessment is discussed in detail.

The pathological appearances of sarcoid granulomas are reviewed in depth. As throughout this book, the figures are excellent in content but not of high resolution. Color illustrations would have been useful. The section on specific organ involvement (Part VII) includes neurosarcoidosis, cardiac (with 171 references), ocular, hepatic, splenic, dermatologic, and osseous complications of the disease. Calcium metabolism and rarer forms of the illness, such as renal, genitourinary, breast, and blood, are also usefully discussed.

Part VIII includes a chapter on the widening armamentarium. This is followed by a discussion of the role of corticosteroids, which "remain the cornerstone of therapy," at least in the short-term, although, as in many other diseases, their long-term adverse effects preclude their use for disease-control in the majority of cases. As expected in a volume of this nature, this subject is comprehensively referenced. Lung transplantation is an option for patients with end-stage pulmonary disease when all other treatment options have been unsuccessful. It is useful to learn that the outcome for patients with sarcoidosis is just as good as for those with other less immunologically mediated or potentially infection-originated lung diseases.

Part IX covers the continuing search for the etiology of sarcoidosis, and in this section a broad spectrum of current thoughts and ideas are presented, along with appropriate references up to 2003. An interesting dichotomy of views appears in the table on page 775 regarding putative causes of sarcoidosis that should be eliminated from consideration, including *Propionibacterium acnes*, as opposed to the cogent discussion in Chapter 13 on the role of *P. acnes* as a cause of sarcoidosis. A final chapter on future directions in therapy completes the book, with references up to 2005.

Overall there is no doubt that this volume achieves its stated aims. It will be very helpful to respiratory therapists, generalists, and family physicians, and it provides a great deal of accumulated knowledge for related specialist physicians and scientists looking for the most up-to-date pool of knowledge in this most interesting and intriguing of diseases.

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Bird Flu: Diagnosis & Treatment. Sudhir Dawra. Delhi: Biotech/Eastern Books. 2006. Hard cover, illustrated, 200 pages, \$11.65.

This book is a combination of text and "annexures" that summarize the recommendations and guidelines of several global government agencies. The annexures, located between Chapters 3 and 4 are not clearly identified, but strongly emphasize a potential outbreak of avian flu in the author's country of origin, which I believe is India. The author, Sudhir Dawra, holds a bachelors degree in industrial relations and personnel management. He has authored numerous books on subjects related to management and information technology, and is an active member of the Labor Commission of India. His current research areas are human resource development, management information systems, and software engineering.

Approximately half of the book is composed of the fifteen annexures, which list information such as the composition of the National Influenza Pandemic Committee, National Contingency Plan for Avian Influenza, Kit for the Veterinary Officer, Guidelines for Cullers (persons responsible for eliminating large numbers of birds), a list of hospitals in India, and guidelines for use of personal protective equipment. The country of origin of the annexures is not disclosed.

In addition to the annexures, **Bird Flu: Diagnosis & Treatment** contains 7 chapters: Introduction; Bird Flu Viruses; Avian Influenza Virus; Influenza Virus A; Pandemic Influenza; Bird Flu: Transmission and Vaccines; and Bird Flu: Safety Measures