

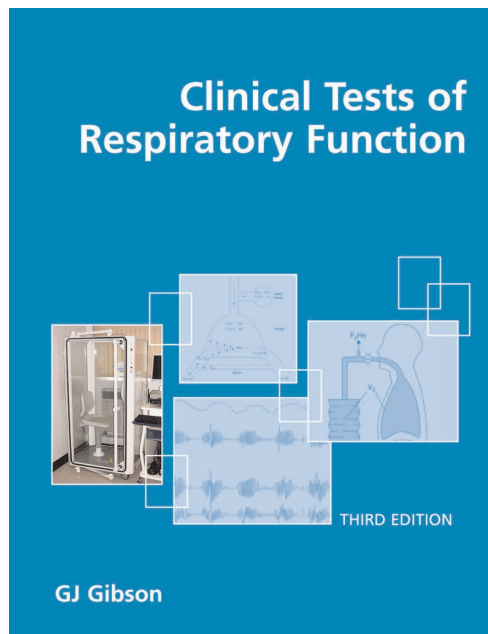
BOOK REVIEW

Clinical Tests of Respiratory Function

Edited by G.J. Gibson

Published by Hodder Arnold, UK

Pages: 432. Price: £85.00. ISBN: 978-0340925614



Knowledge of clinical physiology is unquestionably a major step in the understanding of most respiratory disorders. Despite the abundance of knowledge gained in this field over the past 60 years, the value of pulmonary function testing in clinical practice has not been fully appreciated. This is possibly due to the complexity of respiratory function and a lack of clear communication between pulmonary physiologists and clinicians. After an outburst of enthusiasm for the numerous lung function measurements introduced during the 1980s and 1990s, the tendency was to limit pulmonary function testing to simple spirometry in most instances, while more

comprehensive physiological studies were regarded as unnecessary or even esoteric. Therefore, what is needed nowadays is to provide pulmonologists with a comprehensible and critical picture of the available lung function tests and their value in clinical practice.

In this perspective, the third edition of the book *Clinical Tests of Respiratory Function* is most welcome. This book presents information in a logical and readable way and it is divided into four major parts.

The first part is as a thorough, yet manageable, introduction to respiratory physiology and the methods available to assess it. The principles of classical physiology and new methods are covered in such detailed fashion that this part of the book can be taken as a useful textbook for the staff of pulmonary function laboratories. Importantly, the limits and the advantages of each test are critically discussed in relation to clinical applications. The second part illustrates the functional aspects of common and rare primary diseases of the respiratory system, while the respiratory consequences of disorders primarily affecting other systems are covered in the third part. All topics are relevant to clinical situations and updated making them useful for reference. The value of various tests is discussed separately for each disease condition, which leads to some repetitions of what has already been covered in the first part, but has the advantage of making each chapter self-contained. The fourth part of this book is a ready-to-consult chapter on how to use and interpret lung function tests in clinical practice.

The major advance of this edition over the previous ones is the emphasis given throughout the text to sleep disorders and exercise: fields in which the role of pulmonologists has grown considerably in the last few years. Overall, this third edition can be recommended as a valuable adjunct to the bookshelf of any pulmonary function laboratory and also of clinicians willing to take advantage of state-of-the-art lung function testing.

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