

## BOOK REVIEWS

Asthma is one of the most important chronic disorders in the world. According to the World Health Organization it is the most common chronic childhood disease, and more than 200 million people suffer from the disease worldwide. All clinicians need to be able to diagnose asthma, estimate its severity and treat it accordingly and, as the title implies, this book is a practical resource and a daily aid for young physicians in both a hospital setting and in primary care.

**Asthma: Clinician's Desk Reference** covers the epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis and management of stable adult and childhood asthma, as well as exacerbations. Occupational asthma is also covered. The book also contains a chapter on physician and patient education which is so important in asthma. In addition, there is plenty of practical information, including references to websites that provide patient information and a section on frequently asked questions, as well as illustrations on the use of various inhaler devices. The European Lung Foundation website ([www.european-lung-foundation.org](http://www.european-lung-foundation.org)), which provides a wealth of reliable information in various languages, is unfortunately not included among the resources mentioned.

The strongest merits of the book are a very appealing format, with lots of graphs and illustrations and an easy to read text, broken into short key messages. It is very easy to read and provides a quick overview of asthma.

There is also a chapter based on clinical cases, demonstrating the most common problems in the diagnosis and treatment of asthma which I found very well written and very to the point. I think that all clinicians enjoy well-presented clinical cases and learn from them and I believe that this chapter has a particular educational value. On the downside, there are no references and I think this is a big omission. However, on the whole, young general practitioners and doctors in training will enjoy this book and find it worth reading.

**Respiratory Medicine. 3rd Edition** is a concise book containing 204 clinical questions and the relevant answers. Problem solving is always appealing to clinicians and the questions in this book cover many diverse areas of respiratory medicine. There are questions

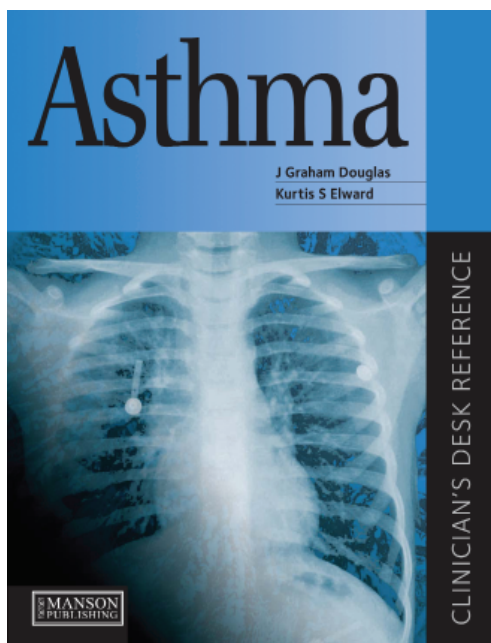
on the more common diseases, such as obstructive airways disease, lung cancer and pulmonary infections, but topics also include lung function testing, imaging, occupational medicine, sleep medicine, intensive care, interventional techniques, thoracic surgery, pulmonary vascular disease, immunological disorders and pulmonary fibrosis. Finally, there are also questions on pulmonary manifestations of systemic disease, long-term oxygen therapy and HIV.

The strength of this book is the format, which makes it interesting to clinicians and highlights the clinical approach to a patient. For a clinician like me, this style is very appealing and helps aid education. The book is written by expert clinicians and both the questions and answers are relevant and interesting.

I think it is unfortunate that there are no references, and there can be a debate on some of the answers. For example, I do not agree with the authors' answer on question 17 that describes a patient whose chest radiograph is compatible with previous tuberculosis lesions and who is about to receive immunosuppressive treatment. The American Thoracic Society/Centers for Disease Control guidelines suggest chemoprophylaxis for a patient with a chest radiograph suggestive of previous tuberculosis and who has not received full treatment. This is even more important if the patient is going to undergo immunosuppressive treatment, such as long-term systemic steroids, and I believe it more or less prohibits the use of other preparations such as anti-tumour necrosis factor. Therefore, I would manage this patient differently to the authors.

There are some typographical errors that have slipped through in the last few questions which I am sure will be rectified in the next edition. Having discussed the strong and weak points of the book, I enjoyed reading it and believe that the colour review will appeal to a wide readership, ranging from senior medical students, to trainees in internal medicine, and to pulmonologists in training and practice.

**M. Gaga**  
Athens, Greece

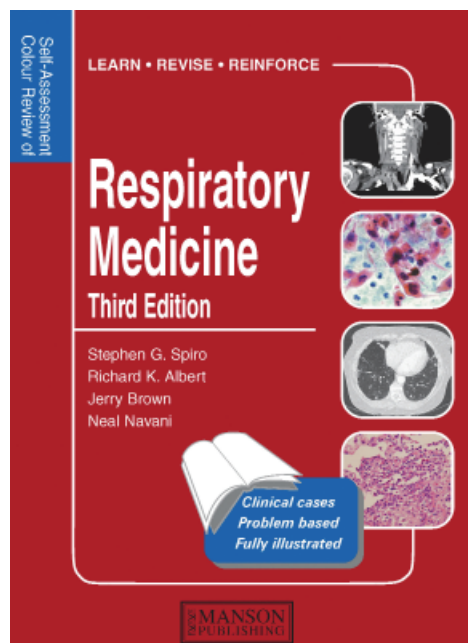


### **Asthma: Clinician's Desk Reference**

Edited by G. Douglas and K.S. Elward.

Published by Manson Publishing.

Pages: 176. Price: £40.00. ISBN: 978-1840760828.



### **Respiratory Medicine. 3rd Edition.**

Edited by S.G. Spiro, R.K. Albert, J.S. Brown and N. Navani.

Published by Manson Publishing.

Pages: 207. Price: £22.95. ISBN: 978-1840761399.