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ANNUAL REVIEW OF PULMONARY AND CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE

Edited by Richard A. Matthay, Michael A. Matthay, and Herbert P. Wiedemann

Hanley & Belfus

This third volume includes 17 chapters covering individual topics from within the field of pulmonary and critical care medicine. Specific topics include pulmonary function and exercise testing, diagnostic techniques, lung cancer, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, interstitial and occupational lung diseases, pneumonia, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, and the respiratory muscles. Chapters with particular relevance to critical care medicine include those dealing with adult respiratory distress syndrome, mechanical ventilation, and hemodynamic monitoring.

The format consists of excerpted articles published within the preceding one to two years. Each article or group of articles is followed by an editorial comment assessing the strength of the article and its particular relevance to the field. Older work is frequently referred to and referenced within the discussion section. An average of 11 articles (range, 6–18) are specifically reviewed in each chapter. Most articles are selected from the major general medical journals and the pulmonary subspecialty journals. Most chapters also include articles from the basic science literature and/or another subspecialty area.

The book is geared toward the physician with a particular interest in pulmonary medicine and requires some familiarity with the field to fully appreciate the discussions. It should be of particular use to the busy practitioner or academician who lacks the time to stay abreast of the burgeoning medical literature. From that viewpoint, the book's brevity (200 pages) is both a strength and a weakness. While easily read, it is not a comprehensive overview of the existing literature.

The chapters are uniformly well written. The invited authors have done an excellent job selecting a mix of articles of both clinical and theoretical relevance. Minor exceptions include the chapter about pulmonary hypertension where the brief synopsis of the excerpted article prevents evaluation of the article on its own merits. The

equally brief subsequent editorial comment fails to provide the literature perspective found in the other sections. The chapter dealing with ventilatory control, in contrast to the other chapters, is written in essay form. Editorial comment overlaps the synopsised articles and proves to be a less-effective format. Finally, despite the book's title, the critical care chapters are limited to the three previously noted and do not include articles on more general aspects of critical care.

In total, the book is a well-written review of the current literature by recognized experts in their field. It has earned its niche in the medical literature.

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HYPERCHOLESTEROLEMIA: CLINICAL AND THERAPEUTIC IMPLICATIONS

Edited by Joseph Stokes III and Mario Mancini

Raven Press

The first two chapters of the 18th volume of *Atherosclerosis Reviews* examine the link between lipoprotein metabolism, the development of atherosclerosis, and its ultimate morphologic expression in the arterial wall. Epidemiologic evidence from prospective population-based studies and clinical trials of cholesterol lowering have established that hyperlipidemia is a very strong risk factor for the development of coronary artery disease and that dietary lipid-lowering drug treatment has a beneficial impact by reducing cardiac mortality. This data, which represent the basis for the current guidelines for the management of elevated cholesterol, are reviewed by the authors in two succinct, thorough chapters.

A summary of the new guidelines from the United States National Cholesterol Education Program and a similar European document provide recommendations for the treatment of hypercholesterolemia. As the knowledge on lipid metabolism accumulates, the potential for pharmacologic intervention at different metabolic sites has expanded. This is reflected in chapters covering the LDL receptor and the mechanisms of action of various classes of lipid-lowering drugs.