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Book Review

ERS monograph on cystic fibrosis, edited by Marcus A. Mall and J. Stuart Elborn

In the current internet era, with easy and rapid access to medical information on our smart-phones, one might question the relevance of medical textbooks. Yet, then comes along something that reminds me of the power of a book, one that is highly readable and provides me with that old-fashioned tactile pleasure. I admit it; I prefer to read off of paper to a screen. I had the recent pleasure of reading the newly published ERS Monograph on Cystic Fibrosis, edited by Marcus A. Mall and J. Stuart Elborn, a timely and comprehensive update of a similar monograph published in 2006. It was a gift that I read on my return home from the European CF meeting this summer. This was no dull tome with properties of sleep induction, but was engaging and enlightening, a reminder that I still have a lot to learn. The book is concise but rather comprehensive, and well-written. It offers a great deal to the experienced CF clinician and scientist, but is not so dense that it can also be recommended for the novice. The topics covered are rather complete, ranging from basic science, such as the pathophysiology of lung disease, to purely clinical research, such as identifying endpoints and biomarkers for clinical trials. The presentation of data and hypotheses is extremely well-balanced, so we should thank the authors for their clarity of writing as well as the editors for their steady guidance.

There is plenty of historical background while offering the most recent of observations. Some of these highlights of advances include what has been learned from the development of novel animal models, namely the CF pig model and the EnaC mouse model, as well as the exploding field of the microbiome. The investigation of genetics is supposed to make our understanding of CF all the more clear, but I admit that I seem to get more confused as I learn more; the chapters on genetic modifiers of CF and newborn screening have brought some perspective back. Translation of these findings from basic to clinical science is well covered and some of the challenges still to be faced are outlined.

Although the book is mostly invested in pulmonary disease and complications, there is ample coverage of extra-pulmonary manifestations of CF. Social issues are reviewed, such as the transition of the patient from a pediatric to an adult care system, as well as the complex issues faced by the adult with CF. What I found most appealing about this monograph is its inclusivity, engaging authors worldwide including Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia. It is also highly collaborative with many chapters written by a group of authors representing several countries.

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