

Book Review

Asthma: a great challenge

Editor by Invitation, Álvaro A. Cruz,
São Paulo: Atheneu, 2004. Série Clínica Médica: Ciência e Arte edited by Antonio Carlos Lopes. Publications of the Sociedade Brasileira de Clínica Médica (SBCM). Various collaborators. 366 pages

The current complexity of medical subjects requires that books covering such themes have various collaborating authors. Therefore, the editing author now has a two-part role, consisting of posing the right questions and selecting those collaborators who give the most appropriate responses.

We see the result of this process in this release. Álvaro Cruz, as a pulmonologist with a solid background in clinical immunology (or a clinical immunologist with a solid background in pulmonology), has been, by virtue of this, a focal point for the problematic issue of asthma in our area. The issues raised in the 23 chapters of this book are those that become obvious if one peruses the available texts dealing with the treatment of patients with asthma.

Let us adhere to one of the golden rules of marketing: "If the product is good, show it." So, here we go: 1) rhinitis, sinusitis and asthma - as a single disease; 2) the study of the airways; 3) epidemiology of asthma and rhinosinusitis; 4) immunopathology of asthma and rhinosinusitis; 5) diagnosis of atopy - IgE-specific tests and skin tests; 6) clinical examination of patients under suspicion of having asthma; 7) functional diagnosis of asthma; 8) dyspnea and asthma; 9) asthma urgency and emergency; 10) intensive asthma treatment*; 11) evidence-based recommendations for pharmacological control of asthma; 12) bronchodilator pharmacology; 13) pharmacology of inhaled corticosteroids; 14) asthma immunotherapy; 15) the price of asthma; 16) limits between asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; 17) asthma and respiratory infections; 18) treatment of allergic rhinitis and its impact on asthma; 19) asthma and exercise; 20) asthma and gastroesophageal reflux; 21) cost-effectiveness and education programs for asthmatics; 22) quality of life for asthmatics; 23) the Brazilian experience with a municipal program for the treatment of asthmatic children: from the pages of the guidelines to clinical practice in health care facilities.

The collaborators rise to the challenge of addressing the chosen themes: the book is a practical and objective guide and yet incorporates the scientific aspects and takes an approach based on evidence and on personal experiences. It is an "easy read". This book would be appropriate for use as a reference in a library, as well as in the briefcase or on the desk of a physician. Therefore, Álvaro's book is also a "must read". Those who do will certainly have much to say about it, and whosoever still doubts it will then have every right to paraphrase the old Tupi warrior and say, "Boys, I read it."

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* Thanks to Augusto Faries and Paulo Dalcin