

BOOK REVIEWS

M. Eric Gershwin y T. E. Albertson
Bronchial Asthma. Principles of Diagnosis and Treatment

4th edition. Totowa, New Jersey: Humana Press, 2001.

This is the fourth edition of a manual that is widely read in the United States. As stated by the authors in their Prologue, it is written mainly for primary care providers. Since the first edition 25 years ago, knowledge of the etiopathogenesis of asthma has considerably increased and as a consequence, so has treatment of the disease. The book contains contributions by prestigious specialists and current concepts on the disease's mechanisms of production are analyzed with special attention paid to the latest diagnostic techniques, both in adults and children. Some of the most recent chapters deal with exercise-induced asthma, asthma in pregnancy, the relationship between infection and asthma pathogenesis, the use of anesthetics in asthmatic patients, and the consumption of several drugs (cocaine, opiates) by asthmatics. Social and legal aspects of the treatment of asthma are also included. Therapeutic aspects in adults and children are dealt with separately but information on the efficacy of immunotherapy is insufficient and up-to-date bibliographical references are lacking. One chapter is devoted to so-called «alternative therapies» and is of interest because of the current tendency of many patients to resort to this type of treatment. The authors conclude that, due to the lack of scientific studies to support treatments, they are of little value.

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