



Breathe – the present issue – Issue 3

◀ The present third issue of *Breathe* presents, as previous issues have, a combination of educational Review articles, Hot topic summaries of papers published in other journals with comments from senior pulmonologists and paediatric pulmonologists, material from ERS School courses and educational Case presentations.

The topics covered span several areas of respiratory medicine, and the Review articles are written by outstanding experts within their field. In fact, two reviews are written by past presidents of the European Respiratory Society (ERS): John Gibson and Walter McNicholas. John Gibson contributes with a Review about spirometry and forced expiratory flow–volume curves, based not only on lung physiology, but also on the historical development of methods for measuring lung function. This paper not only provides very interesting reading, but it also gives us a deeper

understanding of lung function testing than can be obtained purely from physiological considerations. By learning about the historical development of methods of lung function assessment, we can gain insight into the basis for and the development of modern respiratory medicine.

Over recent years, there have been an ever-accelerating number of developments in the discipline of sleep medicine. There have been considerable improvements in both diagnostic methods and treatment and monitoring options available for sleep-related respiratory disorders. Walter McNicholas gives a comprehensive review about sleep apnoea syndrome, including diagnostic procedures, monitoring and treatment. In addition to learning how to care for these patients, we should take note of the statement that “nasal CPAP completely controls the condition, and has a dramatic effect on the patient’s awake performance, because of the normalised sleep pattern”. This could be important for those of us who stay awake night after night working, as this may also have a dramatic effect upon our awake performance.

Quality of life has become a very important topic within medicine. This is especially true for chronic disorders, and several standardised forms for assessing quality of life in different disorders have been published, evaluated and standardised. Elizabeth Juniper has played a prominent role in the development of quality-of-life questionnaires for patients with asthma, adults as well as children, and for caregivers. This has now become a very important part of clinical studies, as a tool to assess the effect of medical treatment, as well as other therapeutic measures. In the present issue of *Breathe*, the importance of these questionnaires as a monitoring and diagnostic tool in the care for asthmatic patients in clinical practice is emphasised.

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Ever since Sir William Osler described asthma as “a peculiar form of eosinophil inflammation” in his Textbook of Medicine in 1892, the understanding of airways inflammation in asthma and allergic disorders has had a prominent place in respiratory medicine. During more recent years, several non-invasive methods for measuring and monitoring airways inflammation have been developed. The concentration of nitric oxide (NO) in exhaled air is one of these, and Ildiko Horvath

describes how measurements of exhaled NO can be implemented into clinical practice in this issue of *Breathe*.

Clinical Grand rounds and clinical Case presentations are important and popular ways of learning about clinical medicine. Four Case presentations are included in the present issue of *Breathe*, each concerned with a different aspect of respiratory medicine.

We would like to encourage our readers to submit their own educational Review articles and Case presentations. The contributions will be peer reviewed by members of the ERS School to ensure the quality of the published content, as well as to give feedback to our contributors. In this way, our readers can contribute to the further development of *Breathe* and its place within the European respiratory community.