

BOOK REVIEW

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Forgotten Killer

Edited by C. Midgley

Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Pages: 108. Price: £18.99. ISBN: 978-0-1992-3732-6

This book (and accompanying DVD) is part of a series of seven books forming an Open University course for students in the first year of an undergraduate programme in Health Sciences. For this reason it can be read with minimal previous knowledge of the lungs, COPD or respiratory diseases in general. In fact, the well-educated patient or their family could probably use the book as well. It is constructed in such a way that is ideal for testing the readers' knowledge. The well-illustrated accompanying DVD takes you slowly through normal physiology, pulmonary function testing, *etc.*

The book nicely covers epidemiology and risk factors, physiology and pathophysiology, diagnosis and management. Each chapter ends with a summary, a list of learning outcomes and self-assessment questions. The text is up-to-date but in some areas so brief that it approaches bullet-point listing. Patients and their relatives will learn very little, if anything, from the

management chapter and the extreme care and attention to making the book instructive with a homogenous layout may have come at the expense of over simplification.

The main problem is that the book may appeal to a wide audience but its direct target group is uncertain. Although the reader doesn't require previous knowledge on COPD, the language quickly becomes quite advanced and technical. I have used it for first year medical students who liked it but were worried that they would have to go through a large number of books similar to this to cover the basics. I will continue using it for first-year students in order to tempt them into respiratory medicine!

J. Vestbo

Hvidovre, Denmark