

Foreword



Enrico Heffler

Enrico Heffler is Assistant Professor in Respiratory Medicine at Humanitas University of Milan, Italy and consultant at the Personalized Medicine, Asthma & Allergy Unit of the same institution. He is an Allergist and Clinical Immunologist with a research interest mainly in the field of asthma and other inflammatory airway diseases; in particular, his research is currently on severe asthma and its inflammatory mechanisms. He is author of more than 90 articles published in peer-reviewed journals. He is currently an elected member of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAAC) Asthma Section Board.

Welcome to the latest edition of *European Respiratory & Pulmonary Diseases*. The past decade has seen numerous advances in the field of respiratory care, and yet respiratory disease remains a leading cause of death and disability worldwide. This edition features a number of topical articles, which illustrate the progress and challenges in this active area of clinical research, and invites discussion around these issues.

In order to minimise the public health impact of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), there is a need to improve its management. In an expert interview, Mario Cazzola discusses the key changes in the recently updated guidelines of the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD). In an editorial, McNicholas describes the often-overlooked overlap syndrome of COPD and obstructive sleep apnoea, and discusses optimal strategies for its management. Sleep is a vulnerable period for people with all forms of respiratory disease. In another editorial, Ersu discusses the need for sleep evaluation in children with chronic lung disease to optimise their care.

Smoking cessation is the one of the most important ways to improve the prognosis of patients with respiratory disease. In an editorial, Bartsch discusses the merits of e-cigarettes as a tool to help people quit smoking.

Many challenges remain in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of asthma. One of many poorly understood aspects of this condition is the possible association between gastroesophageal reflux disease and asthma in children. De Benedictis, Tocco and Lombardi review current evidence, highlight gaps in our knowledge and emphasise the need for caution when prescribing proton-pump inhibitors in this vulnerable patient population. Biddiscombe and Usmani describe the ideal characteristics for asthma inhalers and consider the reasons why so many current asthma treatments fail to improve outcomes. Finally, in an expert interview, Adcock discusses a number of current topics of interest in asthma, including the Unbiased BIOMarkers in PREDiction of respiratory disease outcomes (U-BIOPRED) study and the definition of asthma phenotypes.

The editors of *European Respiratory & Pulmonary Diseases* would like to thank all expert authors who contributed towards this edition. We are particularly grateful to our Editorial Board for their continuing support and guidance. We hope that you enjoy this issue and find plenty of interest among these timely and insightful articles. □