Remarkable progress has been made in respiratory medicine regarding the diagnostics and therapeutics, paralleled with decades of evolution in this discipline. However, many domains and in-depth mechanisms in the field of respiratory medicine remain unknown, and await our unceasing discovery.

For example, dyspnea, cough, chest pain, hemoptysis, and sputum are five respiratory symptoms frequently seen in many medical disorders. In this sense, a pulmonologist may be frequently encountering with many extrapulmonary diseases. Some patients may concurrently suffer from two or more respiratory diseases, so that pulmonologists ought to take into account all relevant etiological factors in a comprehensive manner, before optimal therapeutic outcomes could finally be reached in the patients. For another example, recent years witness an apparent change in our environment and climate. In particular, the frequently occurring haze has raised global concern. At present, we have verified that during severely hazy days, the hospitalization and clinic visits of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma are greatly increased. On the other hand, the relationship between atmospheric particulate matters (especially the currently high-level PM2.5 in Asia) and lung cancer is yet to be fully elucidated in long-term observational studies.

In continuing research and practice, global specialists have gained access to a large number of theoretical or observational data about respiratory diseases. These findings are exponentially increasing, and being published in form of papers we read in world-reputed respiratory journals. Given the rapid surge of academic research and hence of article output, it would be of paramount importance to efficiently sort out and put aside relevant articles on the basis of good timeliness and technical pragmatism. Such an effort would enable our pulmonologists, who are heftily engaged in their daily services, to be maximally exposed to and enlightened by high-quality studies, and ultimately to improve patient outcomes in the practice.

*Journal of Thoracic Disease (JTD)* is the official publication of Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Disease (GIRD) and State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Disease. *JTD* keeps abreast with the latest research progress on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of thoracic diseases, devoting to establish a professional, efficient and open platform for academic communication, and to promote the development of respiratory medicine. Through continued endeavors, we have selected a collection of excellent papers published in *JTD* in the last three years, which are compiled in “Respiratory medicine: A collection of clinical pearls”. We are delighted to present the state-of-art papers on topics of interest, including: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cough, tuberculosis, interstitial lung disease, lung cancer and others alike. In separate sections, we also have papers on intensive care medicine, sleep medicine and airway intervention. To a certain extent, we hope that our work would have presented the advances in respiratory medicine and clinical techniques in the recent years. It is also noteworthy that the section of “air pollution” in this book deals with potential respiratory problems caused by air pollution, and highlights several updates from studies on this topic. We are optimistic that readers would find this book a reliable and brainstorming friend that would inspire future research on respiratory diseases, and contribute to the daily diagnosis of pulmonologists.

Inevitably, despite our maximal endeavor, there remain pitfalls with regards to the selection, evaluation and editing of articles in this book. We do appreciate readers sharing views and ideas on any aspect of this collection through various channels. Your suggestions and contributions will be reflected in our future editions.

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