

Book Review – Professor NM Rahman

Challenging Concepts in Respiratory Medicine

Edited by Lucy Schomberg, Elizabeth Sage, and Nicholas Hart

In the age of the specialist “exit” exams, there are an increasing number of textbooks aimed specifically at those preparing for these sometimes daunting assessments of clinical knowledge and practice. This book is clearly aimed at this audience, but has managed to achieve a text which is more than simply a tool with which to pass the SCE in Respiratory Medicine.

The authors present 22 cases of common and rare respiratory problems, including areas as diverse as asthma, respiratory infection, sleep and ventilation, intensive related issues, pleural disease, transplant and occupational lung disease. The format of the book is excellent – a case history is presented followed by discussion, mirroring what would be expected in normal clinical practice. It is very well presented, easy to read and visually appealing with clear coloured boxes for clinical tips and evidence-based points.

The great strength of this book is the association of each case with an “expert commentary” with arguably some of the most prominent names in Respiratory Medicine in the UK, providing insights and guidance in their area of specialism. Comments from the experts are clearly highlighted and in general provide excellent guidance on the key, controversial and unknown areas in each case, as well as presenting the rationale for the investigation and management. This should allow most readers to gain a clear insight in to not only the investigative and management principles of each case, but also understand the rationale behind the most appropriate approach.

The level of input from the expert commentator is somewhat variable, with some cases discussed in depth and others a little scantier. However, overall this is an excellent addition to the currently available works in this area, and in my view will benefit not only STs coming up to the SCE, but those in respiratory practice seeking to improve their practice and understanding.