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Foreword

We must be grateful to Dr. Scarpa and to the Sardinian Section of the Italian Society for Respiratory Diseases to have had the courage of organizing an international symposium on 'Physiopathology and diagnostic methods in incipient pulmonary emphysema: relationship between structure and function'.

As a matter of fact, the problem of pulmonary emphysema, of its definition and structural bases, although old, will probably not be solved before long. The frequent intrication of emphysema and of chronic bronchitis makes the analysis and definition of both of them more complicated; by the way, both are often associated from the beginning, and this does not make the problem clearer.

The study of emphysema, more particularly of incipient emphysema, meets serious difficulties, indeed. The anatomical definition of lesions should first of all be clearly expressed, but specialists do not agree about it yet. On the other hand, the value of functional investigation techniques for the diagnosis of an emphysema which is clearly defined structurally is still debated and anatomoclinical correlations have to be determined.

If the choice of functional tests and their validity are not established, what about incipient emphysema? What can be known about the meaning and long-term evolution of the clinical or functional abnormalities suggesting emphysema?

Genetic and biochemical studies perhaps allow to recognize subjects prone to develop an emphysema, or to recognize them earlier and more
accurately, or to create experimental emphysemas in animals. Thus, they open new prospects.
All these problems were widely debated during the symposium, which

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left rather quickly the notion of incipient emphysema for a little wider view. A complete survey was made and the present volume is certainly one of the most complete reviews of a difficult problem, since its very title is not clearly defined.
All problems will not be solved in the following pages but all are considered and the research prospects often clearly determined. As Dr. Mittman said precisely, it results that the solution will be approached by international cooperative studies based on standardized techniques as well as on anatomical, functional, genetic, biochemical and clinical levels.
Our Sardinian friends have also thought of this type of coordinated study. Therefore, we must thank them twice, once for making the present status and again, for wanting to promote future research.
Prof. Henry Denolin