New Drugs for Asthma, Allergy and COPD
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For this first volume written in the new millennium I decided to go for a book on new drugs for asthma and COPD which would be of interest to many doctors involved in the treatment of these diseases. When looking for someone to edit this 31st volume of the series ‘Progress in Respiratory Research’ I was fortunate enough to get Trevor T. Hansel and Peter J. Barnes interested. During our initial meeting in Madrid in September 1999, I told them that I would be interested in ‘real’ progress in drug research and not in a book which would be outdated by the time it is printed. After some moments of hesitation they said that this would mean involvement of a lot of researchers from pharmaceutical companies together with clinicians, and what about conflicts of interest!? When I replied that this mix represented the real world, and was exactly what I wanted, they promised to think about it and get back to me. After a short period they announced their concept of putting together a book with 80 ultra-concise chapters addressing every possible drug from established, commercially available substances to compounds in their early testing phase.

The final product exceeds my wildest expectations. Trevor and Peter managed to rally a fantastic group of authors, whose names reflect a ‘who’s who’ in the field. The chapters rarely exceed 4 printed pages, limiting the information to the essentials. The book is lavishly illustrated with 72 tables and 195 colour figures, which have been edited by Trevor to obtain uniformity; that means an eosinophil looks the same in every figure of the book!

This book will serve as a key reference of current and future developments in the treatment of asthma, allergy, and COPD; it will appeal to the practising physician as well as to the pulmonologist with a special pharmacological interest. Get it and enjoy it!

Chris T. Bolliger
Series Editor
Preface

Asthma and COPD have now become amongst the commonest diseases in the world, and both are increasing. There have been major advances in our understanding of asthma and significant improvement in asthma management, particularly with the early and more widespread use of inhaled corticosteroids. Yet, despite effective therapy for asthma, there is a pressing need for new and more specific therapies that control the disease or even cure the underlying disease process. Progress in understanding and treating COPD has been much slower, mainly because the disease has been relatively neglected. None of the treatments available today prevent the relentless progression of COPD and there is an urgent need to develop novel approaches.

The aim of this book is to offer a state-of-the-art description of the exciting progress in research and development that is being made with new therapies for asthma, allergy and COPD. We are very aware that many large tomes that contain review chapters by leading scientific and clinical authorities are already available on allergic and respiratory diseases. On this basis, our major intention was to link the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry with academic and clinical opinion. In order to develop better therapies, we rely on this partnership, since the modern-day reality is that novel drug discovery and production generally occur from within the industry.

We have been amazed by the enthusiastic response from our colleagues in the pharmaceutical industry in providing as much information as they can about early developments with their novel potential therapies. By way of introduction to these contributions, we have overviews written by leading academic clinical scientists. With over 200 authors, and a total of 80 chapters, we hope to provide concise and highly condensed information. In this way we have tried to have specialists from the industry writing on their own fields of interest. This is a rapidly advancing field, and this format of segmented brief chapters has allowed us to put information on the internet, and should permit provision of regular updates.

The book has 14 sections that range from an introduction covering general aspects of drug development for asthma and COPD to a review of currently available small-molecular-weight synthetic medicinal chemical classes: bronchodilators, corticosteroids, anti-leukotrienes, and mediator and protease inhibitors. We then proceed from allergen and IgE-directed therapies to T cell immu-
nomodulation and cytokine-directed therapy, to chemo-
kine receptor and adhesion molecule inhibition, to ther-
apy directed against cell signalling and transcription, be-
fore looking at future prospects for genetic therapy.

A considerable team has been involved in producing
this volume, and we are very grateful for the vision of
Chris Bolliger, Editor of Progress in Respiratory Research,
who always wanted us to go for something ‘completely dif-
ferent’! In addition, we have found the entire staff at
Karger Medical Publishers, Basel, a superbly professional
group of people to interact with.

We hope that you will find this book interesting and
helpful, and that it will give as much enjoyment to you,
the reader, as we have had in its design and editing. Final-
ly, and most importantly of all, we hope that this book will
help in the process of finding better therapy for patients
with allergic and respiratory diseases.

Trevor T. Hansel
Peter J. Barnes

Preface