

Preface

Obesity has become a worldwide epidemic, with more than 1 billion overweight adults (body mass index [BMI] 25 to 29.9) and at least 300 million obese adults (BMI >30). Obesity is now a major health concern, contributing significantly to increased morbidity and mortality; obese persons have a 50% to 100% greater risk of death from any cause than normal-weight persons.

This edition of the *Clinics in Chest Medicine* comprehensively reviews the effects of obesity on pulmonary disease and critical care medicine in 15 articles written by authors from 14 academic medical centers. The opening article by Catenacci, Hill, and Wyatt reviews the remarkable epidemiology of obesity, with a discussion of the genesis of the obesity epidemic and how it has become one of the most difficult public health issues currently and for future generations. Next, the effect of obesity on resting and exercise respiratory physiology is discussed in detail in the article by Sood.

We include two articles on the role of obesity in obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and the obesity hypoventilation syndrome (OHS). Shah and Roux discuss the well-established causative role of obesity in OSA and review the less well-known data that suggest obesity may also be a consequence of OSA. Littleton and Mokhlesi review the current understanding of OHS, a syndrome consisting of obesity, sleep-disordered breathing, and chronic hypercapnia.

The ensuing four articles explore the association of obesity with various cardiopulmonary diseases. Beuther examines the role of obesity in asthma and other obstructive lung diseases. Stein and Goldman review the importance of obesity as a risk factor for venous thromboembolic disease. McCallister, Adkins, and O'Brien explore the influence of obesity on the outcomes of acute lung injury and the acute respiratory distress syndrome. Dela Cruz and Matthay highlight the potential importance of obesity in the pathogenesis of cardiomyopathy and pulmonary hypertension.

Five articles are devoted to the treatment of obesity. Bray extensively reviews the medical

therapy for obesity, whereas Yurcisin, Gaddor, and DeMaria discuss advances in bariatric surgery for weight reduction in obese patients. El Solh focuses on the multiple issues related to airway management of obese patients and emphasizes the importance of technically skilled practitioners. Passannante and Tielborg discuss the issues related to anesthesia in obese patients, and Honiden and McArdle review the important issue of obesity in the intensive care unit, reviewing the physiologic alterations in obesity and the practical challenges in the care of critically ill obese patients.

The final two articles in this issue focus on obese patients at the extremes of age. Fiorino and Brooks discuss obesity in children, including the increased prevalence of obesity and obesity-related diseases in the young. Harrington and Lee-Chiong discuss the combined effects of aging and obesity on the respiratory system.

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