

# Preface

Diseases of the chest are numerous and a multidisciplinary approach by the chest physician and thoracic surgeon is often required, not only in the management of chest malignancies, but also in the treatment of non-neoplastic disorders of the chest. Furthermore, many advances and improvements are put forward in the overall management of patients with advanced lung disease; besides lung transplantation, volume reduction surgery is reported as an alternative surgical option for emphysema patients which may delay, or even preclude the need for transplant.

Management of suppurative lung and pleural infections is a challenging problem in clinical practice; classical surgery stands besides thoracoscopic treatment. The frequency of thoracic injuries in trauma victims forms another challenge for the chest physician and thoracic surgeon considering that trauma ranks, at present, only behind cardiovascular disease and cancer. Although disorders of the trachea are relatively uncommon problems that rarely present in routine practice, successful outcomes require judgment in selecting suitable patients and correct timing of surgery, as well as careful determination of the extent of surgery required.

The role of surgery in many of these non-neoplastic disorders is extensively discussed in this issue of the *European Respiratory Monograph*, largely based on discussions and overview reports presented during an international symposium in 2003 organised by the Guest Editors. I, therefore, would like to thank the Guest Editors and the contributors, an international and multidisciplinary group of experienced clinicians, for their generous contributions to this issue of the *European Respiratory Monograph*.

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