

INTRODUCTION

G. Verleden, D. Van Raemdonck, T. Lerut, M. Demedts

The aim of this *European Respiratory Monograph* is to provide a synthesis and update of the indications and results of thoracic surgery for nonmalignant disorders.

Over the last few years, there have indeed been tremendous innovations regarding aspects of thoracic surgery for non-neoplastic disorders of the chest. Especially the field of surgery for emphysema has provided us with a lot of new treatment options, not only lung transplantation, but also lung volume reduction surgery (LVRS) and great efforts have been put into the development of new endoscopic modalities for LVRS. Also the management of suppurative lung and pleural infections has evolved, where classical surgery stands besides the pulmonologist's thoracoscopic treatment. Surgery for congenital bronchopulmonary disorders, extrapulmonary function-improving surgery and the treatment of tracheal and bronchial rupture all deserve renewed attention, because of new insights into their surgical or conservative management.

An international symposium and meeting on "Surgery for non-neoplastic disorders of the chest" was organised by the Dept of Pulmonary Diseases of the University Hospital Gasthuisberg at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, on 20–22 March, 2003. The purpose was to provide a balanced update of the above mentioned issues, with particular focus on two aspects of lung transplantation: chronic rejection and bronchiolitis obliterans on the one hand, and strategies to prevent and treat reperfusion ischaemia of the donor lung and to decrease organ shortage on the other hand. Some 35 clinical experts and basic researchers in these two fields from all over Europe were gathered for 3 days in Leuven to prepare the present publication. They participated in one of the two working groups (the first on chronic rejection and bronchiolitis obliterans, the second on prevention and treatment of reperfusion and the modalities to decrease the donor organ shortage). Each working group was assigned the task to produce overview reports on these topics. In addition, selected reviews were commissioned on the above mentioned issues.

This symposium was accredited as a "European School of Respiratory Medicine" seminar, and was generously sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline, Belgium, in the framework of the "GSK Chair of Respiratory Pharmacology" attributed to G.M. Verleden.

We are very grateful to E.F.M. Wouters, editor of the *European Respiratory Monograph*, for granting us the privilege of publishing this symposium as a *European Respiratory Monograph*.