The book ‘Basic Methods of Medical Research’ is in its 3rd edition. The preface does not mention what new has been added in the 3rd edition. The book has 15 chapters which include Glossary of Methodological terms and Index. The chapters have been written keeping in view the requirements of planning, conducting, analyzing and report writing of research studies. Analysis part has been restricted to a minimum only. More importance is given to the concepts and principles compared to the methodologies. The book will be useful for postgraduate students and researchers in medical and epidemiological studies. Key terms and concepts have been written in the beginning of each chapter and at the end of each chapter a summary and list of the concerned references have been given.

Chapter 1 gives the basics of medical research identifying the important aspects in the conduct of research. In the second chapter different steps in writing the research protocol are given very briefly. This chapter could have been written giving more details required for describing the different steps adequately with appropriate links with the subsequent chapters. Each of the steps has been given in detail in the subsequent chapters, starting from review of literature. Chapter 4 which describes medical uncertainties could have been written better. The researchers may get lost while reading this chapter without getting into the relevant portions. There is scope for re-writing this chapter with a better flow of the contents. Chapter 5 is well written. Chapter 6 which is on clinical trials is only partially described. Details on some important aspects such as interim analysis and intention to treat analysis have not been mentioned. Chapter 7 on sampling seems to be nicely written. However, sample size estimation has not been dealt with adequately. Only formula for sample size estimation for different designs and hypotheses has been given. Also worked out examples are missing. It is very important to give examples for understanding the sample size estimation clearly. Chapter 8 on data collection and collation is a better one though the collation part is little inadequate. This could have been given in a separate chapter with more details on tabulation and diagrams and graphs with worked out examples.

Chapter 9 deals with the analysis techniques for health and disease data. Each of the analysis techniques has been described briefly. The researchers may have to refer another book for getting more details on the methods. Since the aim of this book is only an introduction to the analysis and mainly meant for concepts and principles this can be understood. Chapter 10 describes the concept of Odds and Risk ratios, validity parameters and ROC curve. Method of ROC curve and its application requires a worked out example. Though written briefly, the contents may serve the purpose of the researchers for understanding and applying these techniques for the analysis of their data.

Chapter 11 is an important chapter which describes the methods of generalization of research results obtained from the analysis of data from the samples. Concepts and principles have been written adequately. Chapter 12 deals with the concepts and principles and to some extent, methodologies for studying cause and effect, possibly the causative factors of diseases. Most commonly used methods have been mentioned and briefly explained.

Chapters 13 and 14 deal with effective presentation of results and writing reports of the research studies.
These two chapters will be very useful to the researchers for presenting their results effectively and in preparing the research reports which could be adequate enough as per the requirements of research funding organizations and journals. The last chapter is on ethical aspects in research studies. The set up of ethical committee, its composition and duties, the modality of getting its approval and guidelines for getting ethical approval have not been mentioned. This is very important for the researchers in fulfilling the ethical requirements for the research projects applied for.

Glossary of Methodological terms will help the researchers to get the meaning of different terms used in preparing research protocols and to some extent in the analysis of data and presentation of results. This has been given exhaustively which will be very useful to the researchers. There are some printing and grammatical mistakes at certain places. But, in general, this book could be a source for the researchers for understanding various aspects of research methods necessary for preparing research protocols and to plan for data analysis and interpretation of the results. This book will provide them an insight to all the necessary components for writing a good research protocol and in preparing their research reports.

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“A Primer of Neuroimmunological Disease” is a welcome attempt to provide basic introduction to the non specialist readers, as the author himself writes that this book is a primer and not an exhaustive reference book. The author has an innovative and simple style, addressing to both the basic scientists and clinicians. The basic principles are provided in a simple and easy to read format. The first three chapters; Immunology for the non-immunologist, Neurology for the non-neurologist, and Neuroimmunology for the non-neuroimmunologist provide the preliminary basic information. Multiple sclerosis is covered in some details, there are five chapters on various aspects (prototypic form, diagnosis, mimics, therapy, and experimental aspects). Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), neuromuscular junction disorders, inflammatory myopathies, neuro-infection, malignancy and degenerative disorders are discussed in separate chapters. The laboratory diagnosis of immunological disorders and the therapy of neuro-immunological disorders are discussed in separate chapters. Several interesting case reports, historical notes and figures are provided. The author has provided many coloured clinical and microphotographs which add value to chapters; tables and flow charts make the reading simple, easy to understand and interesting. Though single author books are becoming rare, but these provide direct communication between the author and reader and are easier to comprehend as the present book. This book is recommended for all neurology residents and practitioners. The cost is high and a cheaper Asian edition would be welcome to increase the outreach of the book to appropriate readers.

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New drugs and targets for asthma and COPD, T.T. Hansel, P. J. Barnes, editors (S. Kargar, Basel, Switzerland). 2010. 310 pages. Price: US$ 292.00, CHF 248.00, €207.00
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Bronchial asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are two common respiratory diseases and in the last century, the burden due to these diseases has worsened. The deadly combination of stress and environmental pollution has resulted in an explosion of bronchial asthma and COPD cases. Health professionals (general practitioners and more so, specialists) should be up-to-date with the latest advances in therapy of these two diseases so as to practice evidence based health care.

From the ancient use of belladonna alkaloids to the discovery and use of beta-agonists such as salbutamol, and then the use of corticosteroids and the more recent use of inhaled corticosteroids and last but not least, prophylactic therapy, the knowledge, approach and management of asthma have seen rapid strides and changes. There is a definite role for newer and more specific therapies taking into consideration the
underlying mechanisms of asthma aetiopathogenesis as well as variations in manifestations. Among the asthma-COPD couple, COPD has been the slower of the two, both in disease progression as well as therapy advancement. Many novel agents and newer concepts in COPD management are surfacing. It is, therefore, appropriate, relevant and in context that this publication has appeared on the horizon. The feature of this book is the multi-author component and input bringing together experts from the academic world as well as scientists at the forefront of drug discovery in the pharmaceutical world. The multi-author nature of the book allows a mixed flavour of looking at topics from different angles and various approaches. The interesting concept is that this book talks about the future as well as the present. The reader, therefore, gets an insight into the possible future modes of therapy in asthma and COPD. For inquisitive minds and for those with a spark of curiosity, this book could possibly open up more research ideas and translate these ideas to pragmatic research questions in the health field. On reading through the contents and chapters, concepts and compounds at every stage of drug discovery and development are discussed. Understanding and reflection for the reader is made easy through a rich array of colourful diagrams, figures and tables. The layout and formatting of the book allows a relatively comfortable read which is important considering some of the more advanced areas which this book is dealing with. The references are appropriate and evidence based.

The chapters of this book are laid out in a relatively seamless manner based on various mechanisms of action and classes of molecules. The introductory chapter written by the editors start with the basis of international guidelines such as Global Initiative on Asthma (GINA) and Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) and their relative limitations. The sets the tone and platform towards the need for newer and novel agents. The introductory chapter presents a good overview of present therapeutic modalities, a peek at newer molecules, a summary table of major initiatives in respiratory clinical research and ends with a mention of advancements in pharmacokinetics, dynamics and genetics being the spur for newer molecules. The book comprises various sections on major therapeutic strategies such as bronchodilators, IgE and epithelial-directed approaches, T-cell co-stimulator blockade, cytokines, chemokines, adhesion molecules, mediator receptor antagonists, enzyme inhibitors, antioxidants, and protease inhibitors. There are also sections dealing with relatively new concepts such as nucleic acid therapy, cell signalling and transcription inhibitors. Newer targets for lung diseases and asthma therapy in the form of toll like receptors are also described. Each section and its chapters drive home a critical evaluation and scientific approach of individualized therapies for not just asthma and COPD, but also associated conditions. Details of preclinical animal models, clinical studies and their comparative outcomes and conclusions are given in meticulous fashion. The chapters are succinct, focussed and lucid.

For those with a clinical background, the sections on bronchodilators, mediator receptor antagonists and antioxidant strategies are worth reading. The complexity of these topics has been broken down to lucid and flowing words accompanied by comprehensive tables and figures. The approach and descriptions were truly thought provoking. The approach of the authors, the concept and contents of the book, and the move to include possible drugs of the future ensure that this book is a must read for research scientists and clinicians alike. In conclusion, this is a good book for both scientists and clinicians. The editors have followed up on their initial book on “New Drug for Asthma, Allergy and COPD” and brought out this more attractive book. The extra reward this time is the thought provoking style of many of the authors, the mixture of academia and industry, and the update of asthma and COPD therapy leading to an insight into the future. Its lucid and well formatted design will ensure a wide readership and a basis for any new therapy in the realm of respiratory diseases.

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