

Preface

Pregnancy is associated with physiologic changes that help compensate for the increasing demands of the fetus and placenta. Clinically, pregnancy acts as a stress test that unmasks maternal disease and may have long term implications for maternal and fetal health. General obstetricians are often hesitant to care for complex medical problems, and internists to care for pregnant patients, which may create a gap into which sick pregnant women will fall at a time when they are most vulnerable.

Investigation and treatment of pregnant patients with pulmonary disorders is often hindered by both a fear of doing harm to the fetus and by the paucity of data needed to make recommendations. At Women and Infants Hospital, the tertiary women's teaching hospital at Brown University, 10,000 deliveries occur every year. The editors of this textbook are members in the division of obstetric and consultative medicine, a group of obstetric internists and medical specialists that provide consultation to obstetricians on complex medical and pulmonary problems. Most pulmonary and critical care training programs provide little exposure to this population. Despite this, pulmonologists and intensivists are often called upon to provide consultation to critically ill pregnant women.

As editors, our hope was to gather pulmonologists, intensivists, obstetric internists, high risk obstetricians and obstetric anesthesiologists from across the globe to shed light on some common or complex pulmonary issues occurring in pregnancy. The book is divided into three parts. The first few chapters introduce the reader to the normal physiologic changes that occur during pregnancy. The chapter on high altitude is included to illustrate the consequences of chronic hypoxia on maternal and fetal outcomes, to help extrapolate to the effects of chronic pulmonary conditions. The second part reviews general management principles, including diagnostic imaging and prescribing in pregnancy. The final, longest part includes multiple chapters on specific pulmonary disorders. The specific chapters are intended to summarize the available literature, linking science to bedside, and make management recommendations whenever possible. Our goal is that the careful reading of this text will stimulate further investigation into this fascinating and under explored area of medicine.

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