Genetics and pulmonary medicine

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Introduction

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These are exciting times in pulmonary medicine with molecular advances steadily providing increasing insights into the complex mechanisms of lung biology and the development of disease. These advances in knowledge will, in due course, set the scene for the development of novel modes of prevention, early and precise diagnosis, and treatment—which the pulmonologists of the future will deploy. *Thorax* launches today (p 389) a series of articles on one important area of these molecular advances—genetics. The series, as planned, is not meant to be comprehensive but is intended instead to illustrate some of the exciting advances and to convey how broadly genetic factors engage pulmonary medicine. And so the series includes articles on cystic fibrosis and

antitrypsin deficiency, of course, but also articles on, for instance, inherited thrombophilia and pulmonary embolus, on the genetics of the human-microbe interaction (including the human and microbial genetics), and how these impact on the risk of disease and antibiotic use, on the complex and heterogeneous genetics of atopy and asthma, and on somatic genetic change and how this drives malignant cell growth. We hope readers will enjoy and be stimulated by our contributors' articles, which we very gratefully acknowledge. Continued engagement between the clinician and the molecular researcher will be essential in driving this promising field forward towards relief of pulmonary illness—and we will be very pleased if this series, in some way, promotes this crucial interaction.