Bronchiectasis has been a well-known disease for a long time. Following the introduction of antibiotic treatment in clinical practice for respiratory tract infections, the problem of bronchiectasis appeared to be solved, with some exceptions, e.g. in diseases such as cystic fibrosis. However, bronchiectasis is associated with a number of immunological diseases and occurs as a long-term complication of chronic lung diseases. These types of diseases, mainly chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, have become more and more prevalent, which has again made bronchiectasis a disease of interest. Unfortunately, most of the evidence regarding bronchiectasis is from case series and uncontrolled studies. Bronchiectasis has not been a focus of the pharmaceutical industry and randomised controlled studies have never been performed. Specific guidelines focusing on bronchiectasis are yet to be published.

Over the past few years the scene has changed dramatically. Bronchiectasis is now a hot topic for epidemiological, basic and clinical research. A number of drugs, such as inhaled antibiotics and substances improving sputum clearance, are now available in a clinical development programme, the first results of which will be presented later this year. Therefore, now is the time to summarise the current knowledge about bronchiectasis.

The Guest Editors of this Monograph have succeeded in attracting leading experts within the field to write chapters which provide an overview from current pathophysiology, diagnostics and treatment to future developments that are on the horizon.

I want to congratulate the Guest Editors for this excellent Monograph, which will be of interest and use to basic scientists and clinicians in their daily practice.

Editor in Chief
T. Welte