Book review

The Physiology and Medicine of Diving. 3rd ed. Edited by P B Bennett and D H Elliott. (Pp 570; £35.00.) London; Bailliere Tindall, 1982.

The impact of diving on occupational medicine has increased since the early 1970s when oil exploration and then production became important in the North Sea. Previously hyperbaric medicine had largely centred around compressed air divers and caisson workers, as reflected in the content and title suffix of the second edition of this volume, printed in 1975. The suffix "And compressed air work" is dropped from the title for this newly released edition, thus indicating a change in emphasis towards the importance of the relatively great depths now achieved in mixed gas diving on hyperbaric physiology and medicine.

The organisation of the book is similar to the previous edition, with chapters often written as review articles. Most chapters have been completely rewritten and, in all, the literature and evidence reviewed has been updated. This is probably the most valuable aspect of the recent edition, for

the general content of the book is the same as the previous publication.

The list of contributors has altered in part and the number of chapters has fallen from 29 to 23. This has mainly been achieved by merging chapter content rather than omitting subject matter entirely. In most cases this objective has been achieved satisfactorily.

Similarly, to help in clarity and organisation, some subject matter has been further divided from its arrangement in the second edition to be considered in separate chapters in this new publication. (For instance, SCUBA diving practice and equipment and commercial diving practice and equipment are now separately discussed, as are the causes and the management of diving accidents.)

A large section of the book remains devoted to the discussion of decompression. The theories of decompression are, however, reviewed in a much condensed fashion. The various schools of thought on this subject are stated but not argued much in comparison. In this text the emphasis is taken off the theory and shifted rather

towards a discussion of the clinical disorders that arise when an individual does not respond in the predicted way, or when particular table is used incorrectly.

The first half of the book is concerned with man's physiological response to the hyperbaric environment and the interface of physiology and engineering. The content should be of use to the engineer who has already been introduced to the basic physiological principles but requires to extend his knowledge to the physiological problems presented by a hyperbaric environment. Similarly, it should be useful for the scientist who requires to extend his knowledge to the effects of high pressure on the body but who is already familiar with the basic principles concerned. The text rarely starts at an elementary level as a means of introduction, but rather assumes a basic familiarity with the subject matter. As such it should provide an excellent text for medical library shelves as a source of reference for the specialist student, the research worker, and the doctor concerned with the management of diving accidents.

J N NORMAN

Notices

The Neuropsychological Effects of Solvent Exposure

Edited by Nicola Cherry and HA Waldron (published by the Colt Foundation, 1983)

This volume contains the proceedings of a symposium held at the London School of Hygiene in 1982. The symposium brought together some of the leading workers in the field to present an account of the latest work and to suggest how future research might best be directed. Chapters include: Some clinical and neuropathological correlations in four solvent intoxications (JB Cavanagh); Solvent-induced peripheral neuropathy in man (Helen Venables); Event-related potentials: an alternative methodology for neurotoxicology research (D Otto); Solvent metabolism: interactions and idiosyncrasies (HA Waldron); The Danish experience with white spirit (K-H Cohr); Does solvent poisoning exist? (S Hernberg); Long term neuropsychological effects of solvent abuse (Mary King); Epidemiology of solvent related neuropsychiatric disorders (O

Axelsson); Exposure chamber studies (I Andersen); Field studies of the acute effects of exposure to solvents (F Gambale and A Kjellberg); Computer based behavioural test batteries (D Otto); and Research in Britain (Nicola Cherry, Helen Venables, and HA Waldron). Each chapter is followed by a discussion and, in addition, three discussants, EG Lucas, D Oakes, and A Summerfield, describe how they regard the current state of the art from the psychiatric, statistical, and psychological points of view respectively.

This authoritative account of the present state of knowledge about the acute and chronic effects of solvent exposure will be of value to all concerned in occupational health. The comprehensive list of references will be of particular help to those who are coming newly to this important area of occupational toxicology.

The book may be obtained directly from the Institute of Occupational Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT (price £5.50 + £1.50 post and packing).

Symposium on work related diseases

4-8 June 1984, Hanasaari Cultural Centre, Espoo, Finland

Work related diseases comprise not only occupational diseases, where some occupational factor is a sufficient cause of a disease, but also other diseases closely related to work. The symposium will focus on studying other diseases closely related to work such as those affecting the cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, respiratory, and neurological systems; morbidity in general; and the social, psychological, and psychiatric aspects. Although mainly composed of invited lectures, free communications (15 minutes) will also be considered for presentation. Further details about these may be obtained from the scientific secretary. Other details may be obtained from the symposium secretary Ms Outi Teperi.