BOOK REVIEWS


This booklet details the proceedings of a symposium held in November 1963 at the Royal Society of Medicine. The subject was discussed under four headings: (1) the general problem and environmental factors, (2) the aetiology and nature of the disorder as manifested in the individual, (3) the possibilities of influencing the disease by changes in environment and behaviour, (4) the specific treatment of the disease and the management of the patient. The 15 speakers covered a wide range of interests, including general practice. The meeting closed with a half-hour panel discussion.

The papers are short, perhaps too short, for the conference covered an immense amount of ground in a single day. But there is a great deal of practical information given, notably about lightweight portable oxygen apparatus, the best way to use antibiotics, and the criteria for the use of steroids. There is also a particularly interesting section on the cost of antibiotic treatment and the much larger amount saved by its effective use in terms of National Insurance sickness benefits. The booklet is well illustrated, four of the plates being in colour.

W. Brockbank


The authors first describe the early history of deep sea diving, noting the depths reached by the pioneers and the methods employed.

There are excellent descriptions of various waters hitherto explored and some striking illustrations which show the many variations in the configuration of the sea bottom and the flora and fauna found there.

The physiological changes occurring under pressure are well described, and from this the writers describe the aetiology of the disorders which may occur in the human body. Air embolism and ‘the bends’ are carefully studied, and some interesting figures are given to illustrate the changes occurring in the blood and tissues.

The treatment and prevention of sundry disorders of divers are noted. Overdistension of the lungs and of the gastro-intestinal tract are noted, and much attention is given to the effects of excess or deficiency of oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and other gases. In the chapter on the effects of underwater explosions the value of anti-blast equipment developed by the British is noted.

Ear troubles and sinus disorders associated with diving are well described.

In their final chapters the authors describe the many kinds of dangerous sea creatures which may trouble divers.

It is noted that among the infections to which divers may be exposed are typhoid fever and leptospirosis, though the hazard much diminishes as the salt content of the water rises.

Accidents from the use of harpoons or other appliances are not uncommon and many are known from the unexpected proximity of ships’ propellers. It is suggested that easily visible marks indicating the presence of divers below should always be placed on the surface with suitable anchorage.

G. C. Pether


This book is made up of numerous sections written by the editor himself or by one or sometimes two of his collaborators, Dr. G. Jacob, Dr. R. Kiviuloto, and Dr. H. Müller. It is not a systematic textbook of pneumoconiosis nor does it deal with all the varieties of dust conditions of the lungs. The main concern of the book is the differential diagnosis of dust inhalation diseases. Attention is given to the personal and industrial history, the clinical picture and particularly to the radiological findings. As all the contributors are radiologists and since radiological findings are the basis of diagnosis in pneumoconiosis, radiology is a predominant feature. This is shown by the numerous excellent photographs of x-ray films, often grouped in twos or threes to show changes in individuals over a period of time. Pathology is discussed mostly in relation to changes in the x-ray film. Photographs of large lung sections are shown: several of these were produced by Professor Gough.

In a detailed description of the various classifications of the opacities in pneumoconiosis Drs. Bohlig and Müller plead for an amendment to the Geneva Classification of 1958. This is to substitute the small letter f for the capital letter L for ‘linear opacities’; this would bring them into line with ‘small opacities’ which are at present denoted by the small letters a, b, and c. This, among other advantages, would allow the quantitative features represented by 1, 2, and 3 to be noted as they are in ‘small opacities’. It would have the advantage, for example, of allowing a classification of the opacities in asbestosis.

A very notable feature throughout the book is the full discussion of points in which opinions are quoted from the literature. The extent of this may be measured by the fact that there are over 1,800 references listed at the end of the book. Radiologists interested in pneumoconiosis...
BOOK REVIEWS

Charles L. Sutherland


The fact that a report with this title is needed is a sad reminder of the division of the medical profession into those whose interest is in curing disease and those whose interest lies in prevention. The medical practitioner, by tradition, can usually deal only with persons who seek his help after symptoms of illness have developed. How is the important contribution of preventive medicine to the teaching of medicine to be made? This report attempts to answer this question.

The report is divided into five chapters, and the best of these is that which deals with Preventive Medicine in Undergraduate Teaching. Here we are taken right away from the old set course of lectures in Public Health to the idea of this subject being taught at all stages of the curriculum; it is not to be regarded as a special subject but as an aspect of all subjects. This chapter is worth reading by all medical teachers.

The chapter on aiding the practitioner in the preventive aspects of his work is less stimulating. Doubtless this is because an international report has to cater for all countries, whether industrialized or in an early stage of development.

This report provides important reading for anyone who wants to see industrial medical services expanded. For if new doctors are to be brought into this field nothing will have been achieved if they are not interested in the principles of prevention.

W. R. Lee


This report of some 280 pages is not so formidable to assimilate as it appears at first sight. About three-quarters of it can be regarded as a reference as it consists of a summary of the research which is being conducted by the National Institute for Medical Research and by the many research units and working parties which are supported or sponsored by the M.R.C. In this section the reader can find, out from among the many fields in which the Council is active, what is being done in those which are of interest to him. The industrial physician will be particularly interested in the work of the research units on body temperature, pneumoconiosis, carcinogenic substances, toxicology, industrial injuries and burns, social medicine and radiation and in some of the specialized advisory committees such as those on occupational health, the aetiology of bronchitis, railway accidents, and those on radiation.

The report contains eight special articles on various aspects of medical research. These are to be published by H.M. Stationery Office in September, 1964, under the title Current Medical Research. Although none of them is on occupational health the industrial medical officer will be interested and rewarded by reading, among others, the articles on epidemiological research in psychiatry, organ transplantation, and clinical genetics.

Probably the most important part of this annual report is the M.R.C.'s statement on Responsibility in Investigation on Human Subjects. There can be little doubt that this will form the basis of the ethical code to be observed by the medical profession—and probably to be accepted by the courts—for a long time in the future. In 1953 the Council issued a statement on this subject but it referred only to investigations on patients; now, the ethics in regard to those on healthy subjects and other volunteers are included. These two classes of subjects, patients and volunteers, are considered separately.

Procedures undertaken, as part of patient care, that is, to benefit the individual either for treatment, prevention or assessment, are governed by the ordinary rules of professional conduct which apply to the doctor-patient relationship. If the new procedure is aimed at benefiting the patient, and if the patient's consent is obtained or can be assumed, the fact that the procedure is new is relevant only insofar as special care is needed and should be exercised. It is, in fact, a matter of professional judgment whether the new procedure offers a better chance of benefit than existing measures. This principle can be extended to the investigation of a new vaccine, as the intention is to benefit the individual by protecting him against a future hazard. Controlled clinical trials raise special problems and the Council advises that they should always be planned by a group of investigators and never by an individual alone. Any patient taking part should be withdrawn if, in the opinion of any of the doctors participating, it is in the patient's best interest.

Investigations on volunteers may involve either healthy or ill persons. They are usually undertaken solely for the purpose of contributing to medical knowledge and are not designed to benefit the particular individual. For these reasons they require 'true consent'. The report discusses and amplifies the rights of volunteers and the question of their consent and of consent in the case of the young and the mentally subnormal. True consent is defined as consent freely given with proper understanding of the nature and consequences of what is proposed. Particular care is necessary when the volunteer stands in special relation to the investigator, for example patient and doctor, student and teacher [and, although it is not specifically mentioned in the report, workman and factory doctor].

So specialized has medicine become that in many types of investigation only a small number of experienced men are likely to be competent to pass an opinion on the justification for undertaking it. If any doubt exists, research workers should obtain the opinion of experienced colleagues on the desirability of the procedure or should refer to one of the specialized scientific societies. [Members of the Association of Industrial Medical Officers will not need to be reminded that its Research Advisory...]

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Staublungenerkrankungen und ihre Differentialdiagnose
(Pneumoconioses and Their Differential Diagnosis)

Charles L. Sutherland

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