(4) The curious ideas about ventilation per descensum unless the solvent is warmed when per ascensum is also admitted. Some work on the relative concentrations of benzene vapour at different levels above the floor would indicate whether this doubtful thesis is tenable. This may account for what is described as a veritable scourge of cases.

(5) The lack of references to any work on the subject outside France, Germany and Italy. Of 79 references only three are outside these countries. This apparent chauvinism, however, does not detract from the interest and value of the book.

ROBERT MURRAY


The first edition, published seven years ago, was praised for its imaginative approach but criticized for its brevity; in parts there was not quite enough flesh on the bones of the ideas. This edition, nearly three times the length of its predecessor at just over twice the cost, gives a much fuller account of epidemiological methods and their application. The ideas with several additions are well illustrated with old and new epidemiological enquiries.

Seven uses of epidemiology are outlined. Study of the History of the Health of Populations (I) and Diagnosis of the Health of the Community (II) are obvious essentials to any health service—national, local or occupational—since they show how diseases change their incidence and measure the present dimensions and distribution of health and disease. But how many communities have usable, comprehensive inventories of their recognized chronic physical disease problems and of the needs for community care and rehabilitation? ‘There has been far too little spill-over from traditional public health with its long experience of tuberculosis and rheumatic heart disease registries.’ ‘National Insurance has a potentially fabulous store of information and far greater effort should be devoted to realizing it.’

Study of the Working of Health Services (III) to know how they are really working with a view to their improvement, as distinct from laws, plans and pronouncements about them, is likely to be an unpopular field of enquiry. This is perhaps why so little has been done by the health services and, to our academic shame, why the contribution from the universities has been so meagre. To show, for example, that case fatality rates for ischaemic heart disease, hernia with obstruction, appendicitis with peritonitis, and prostatic hyperplasia are significantly higher in non-teaching than in teaching hospitals is the kind of unpleasant social fact that, by almost universal agreement, is best swept under the carpet. But still those responsible for health services should endeavour to find the causes of such disparities.

To Estimate Individual Risk from Group Experience (IV) is a classical use of epidemiology but its application to the problems of the day, and expressed in terms that can be generally understood, has a real potential in preventive medicine. For the heavy smoker to know and to be reminded continually that he is 20 times more likely to die of lung cancer than the non-smoker has already had a profound effect on the smoking habits of doctors, with no doubt the added stimulus of their clinical experience of lung cancer and the need to set an example. As more and more forward-looking studies of the chronic diseases are developed, more and more people will want to know the answers to such questions as—What are the chances of the athletic, non-smoking Jack Spratt having ischaemic heart disease in his fifties or sixties? Is self-denial worth while?

Completing the Clinical Picture of Disease (V) and Identifying Syndromes (VI) are obviously inter-related. The more complete the clinical picture the more it will be possible to describe epidemiological patterns with enough confidence to identify syndromes. These uses are well illustrated with examples from the author’s own work on atherosclerosis, ischaemic heart disease, and cerebral vascular disease.

The longest and the most important chapter, entitled In Search of Causes (VII), contains an attractive mixture of theory and practice. There is a good discussion of multiple causes of disease, emphasizing that the concept of host and environmental causes is too simple because of the importance of personal habits and behaviour which derive from both. The discussions of the causes of ischaemic heart disease, essential hypertension, bronchitis, and the ecology of mental disorders will be of general interest to any doctor, if only to emphasize his ignorance and to challenge us to find some of the answers.

This book is written for students of both clinical and preventive medicine, which means everyone in or associated with medicine who is interested in measuring the amount and severity of disease in a population. It has a special value to teachers because of its many excellent examples, and to the occupational physician who has such unique opportunities for studying health and disease in populations. Not surprisingly, there is an abundance of examples of studies in occupational medicine, demonstrating uses of the epidemiological method.

Anyone short of ideas for research should read this book without skipping the meaty little footnotes, and taking note of the ample bibliography. R. S. F. SCHILLING


The earlier parts of this series were concerned with general recommendations and codes of protection against ionizing radiation. The present two parts, which are in handy pocket-book form, deal with the specific problems indicated by the titles. Part V, however, which has to deal with problems of internal contamination of the body with radioactive substances, has a general chapter on external and internal irradiation.

Since each is a small book it contains the minimum of what the competent person in charge of protection needs to know and to have at hand during industrial operations. They are therefore most suitable for small firms and...
Uses of Epidemiology

R. S. F. Schilling

*Br J Ind Med* 1965 22: 244
doi: 10.1136/oem.22.3.244

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