Audiological Handbook of Hearing Disorders. By Stephen V. Prescod. (Pp. 273; £14.55). Van Nostrand Reinhold: Wokingham. 1978.

Generally speaking, audiology technicians spend their time testing patients, and producing audiometric charts without any knowledge of the different underlying conditions that produce variations from the normal.

In the field of industrial audiometry the natural assumption is that all deafness is the result of noise. This is not always the case.

This compact readable book explains in simple terms the various outer, middle and inner ear pathologies that cause hearing loss. The audiometric results of each condition described are illustrated and explained. Short case reports illustrate the relevant clinical and audiological features. Summaries of each chapter provide quick access to essential information, and all chapters end with excellent lists of references and suggested reading.

The chapter on noise-induced hearing loss is comprehensive; it explains well the different types of acoustic trauma, the difference between temporary and permanent threshold shift, and audiological tests used in diagnosis.

The book contains a comprehensive glossary of medical and technical terms which will prove useful to the non-medical reader.

The practicalities of audiometric technique are not explained and it is assumed that the reader already has this facility.

To those involved in audiometry the information contained will add considerable insight to their daily work, and its acquisition will prove rewarding.

The author is to be complimented on producing a book that fills a gap in the field of audiological writing. My one minor regret is that he failed to include a chapter on non-organic hearing loss, and to cover the audiometric techniques and investigations available.

H. F. MARSHALL

Visual Aspects and Ergonomics of Visual Display Units. Edited by V. M. Reading. (Pp. 128; £7.00). Institute of Ophthalmology, University of London, Judd Street, London WC1H 9QS. 1978.

Although Visual Display Units (VDUs)

have been used in some offices for 15 years, it is only in the recent past that they have started to become widespread, and office work is now entering an era as revolutionary as any in factories over the past century. Many occupational physicians have been faced with allegations that work with VDUs can damage eyesight, and it is always difficult to prove a negative. This booklet should therefore be widely welcomed, as it consists of the thirteen authoritative papers given at a Department of Visual Science course in the Institute of Ophthalmology in October 1978. The twelve experts who contributed to this course have produced an invaluable collection of well referenced papers on all health-related aspects of the subject. These include visual factors in the design of displays, the paramount importance of the ergonomic aspects of VDUs, postural stress in sedentary work and a case study in one large office where the introduction of VDUs created health problems found to be due to glare. To my mind, three of the papers are particularly topical: one by Mr Harlen of the National Radiological Protection Board aptly entitled 'Radiation: the non-hazards of VDUs', a most stimulating paper on the nature and causes of eyestrain by Dr Heaton, and finally the concluding paper by Professor Weale which stresses that problems are ergonomic, psychological and motivational rather than visual. There is no scientific reason to justify the allegations of visual damage which have, as he states, turned the VDU into 'an ocular whipping boy'. This is essential reading for all occupational physicians and others involved with VDUs.

P. J. TAYLOR

Notices

International Conference on Systems Science in Health Care

The University of Montreal, under the sponsorship of Health and Welfare Canada, the General Institute of Health Services of Canada, the Quebec Public Health Association and of other scientific and professional associations, is organising an international Conference on Systems Science in Health Care in Montreal, 14-17 July 1980. Papers are invited from those interested in the application in the health field of systems analysis, operational research, management sciences, cost-

benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses. Abstracts of about 400 words, in French or in English, should be submitted to the Conference Chairman before 31 December 1979. Successful applicants will be advised before 29 February 1980.

The objective of this Conference is to emphasise the application of the systems analysis approach in identifying and resolving problems encountered in the management of systems of recovery, maintenance, prevention and promotion of health. Contributions related to problems ranging from strategic choice-of-objectives problems to tactical efficiency problems will be taken into consideration. Papers dealing with national and regional health systems will be considered, as well as those concerning the management of a particular institution or programme. Theoretical propositions are welcome, but statements of successful practical applications will be favoured.

Correspondence and abstracts should be addressed to: Dr Charles Tilquin, EROS (Equipe de Recherche Operationnelle en Santé), Université de Montreal, ELLENDALE, CP 6128, Succursale 'A' Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 3J7.

Workshop on Ergonomic Aspects of Visual Display Units

The Permanent Commission and International Association on Occupational Health, together with Carlo Erba Foundation (Occupational and Environmental Health Section), is holding a Workshop on Ergonomic Aspects of Visual Display Units in Milan on 17-18 March 1980. Problems of visual fatigue, constrained body postures, and physiological and psychological effects related to work at visual display units, will all be considered. Anyone interested in attending the workshop or in submitting a paper for presentation should write for further information to Professor E. C. Vigliani of the Occupational and Environmental Health Section, Carlo Erba Foundation, Via Cino del Duca 8, 20122 Milan, Italy.

American Registry of Environmental Pathology

A Registry of Environmental Pathology has recently been organised within the Department of Environmental and Drug-