Correspondence

Investing dose response relations in occupational mortality studies: something to keep in mind

SIR,—In their recent article (1987;44:642–4) Swaen and Volovics discuss the correct method for calculating person-years when a dose response relation is examined. They explain that when exposure is measured by an amount of time in a particular environment, care is needed in attributing the person-years to correct levels.

Two points may be worth making. Firstly, it should be noted that this issue was raised with some cogency in correspondence in the *Lancet* over ten years ago in relation to a study of vinyl chloride monomer and mortality. The original authors^{1,2} did not use a correct method and showed a spurious inverse trend in mortality with increasing exposure. Their error was pointed out by others.^{3–5} The debate forms a useful demonstration of the implications of the right and wrong approaches.

Secondly, the need for appropriate allocation of the person-years may be seen clearly by analogy with age. If a worker is followed up for 40 years, from age 30 to age 69, it must be obvious that in calculating a standardised mortality ratio one should not allocate 40 years to the 65–69 years category. To do so, however, would involve the same error as allocating the entire person-years of experience of a worker with 10 or more years of exposure to the 10+ category.

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- 2 Duck BW, Carter JT. Vinyl chloride and mortality? *Lancet* 1976;ii:195.
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Anyone for teno?

SIR,—I agree that tenosynovitis is an important problem in industry (1987;44:793–4). I have a comment on the treatment of “real” tenosynovitis. We have used heparin 5000 IU three to four times daily for

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four to five days with excellent results. The concentrated solution (25 000 IU/ml) should be used and given by deep intramuscular injection. This treatment is well known in sports medicine.

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Book reviews

Pathology of tumours in laboratory animals. Vol I. **Tumours of the rat.** Parts 1 and 2. Edited by VS Turusov. (£50.) World Health Organisation. Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer, 1987. (Oxford University Press.)

This text is one for the diagnostic pathologist being of a taxonomic and catalogic nature. The 325 or so pages review the tumours found in the rat, organ by organ, each chapter written by a different author and each beginning with a brief description of normal histological structure. It is a compilation of facts with little interpretation of the subject and carries a fairly extensive and useful reference list with each description, although these are dated as there is little reference to any work in the 1980s. Some reference to human tumours is made in each section, albeit briefly but nevertheless usefully. The text does not comment on aspects of cell line culturing or other more experimental studies; readers must turn to other sources for these. This absence perhaps is a reflection of the dated nature of the work covered by this volume.

The photographic illustrations, although quite numerous, are only of medium quality with the higher power pictures at times very poor. Thus the diagnostician is left somewhat wanting in trying to compare his or her unknown sample with the examples in this book. The lack of an index is frustrating.

Despite the above reservations the aim of attempting to standardise the nomenclature and classification that this book sets out to achieve (as stated in the preface) is a noble and useful one. Those engaged in the routine diagnosis of laboratory animal tissues will find it useful to have this volume on his or her shelf.

C MACKENZIE

Pathology of the mesothelium. Edited by JSP Jones. (£95.) London: Springer-Verlag, 1987.

As the preface states this book takes a healthy new approach to this subject by treating the mesothelium as an organ in its own right, thereby concentrating