the sick building syndrome suggests that this may apply to both psychosocial and organisational factors as well as physical characteristics of work.²

(2) A valid method should be developed for the assessment of the psychosocial factors which seem to affect the perception and reporting of symptoms and complaints, to evaluate their influence in a particular study, and—if possible—to correct for their effects.

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- 1 Spurgeon A, Gompertz D, Harrington JM. Modifiers of non-specific symptoms in occupational and environmental syndromes. *Occup Environ Med* 1996;53:361-6.
- 2 Crawford JO, Bolas SM. Sick building syndrome, work factors and occupational stress. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 1996;22:243-50.

Author's reply—We thank the correspondents for their comments on our paper, and fully agree. The point that psychosocial factors may also affect awareness, and thus reporting of possible hazards in the workplace is well taken and supported by the literature. It was our intention that these aspects should be subsumed within the psychosocial pathway, particularly in relation to contextual factors, attitudes, beliefs, etc.

We also endorse the view that there is a need for a valid method to assess the influence of psychosocial factors on symptom reporting in relation to any particular hazard. This is particularly important in the workplace where the results of any such assessment should help to determine the focus of any prevention and control strategies. In many cases this focus may turn out to be psychosocial rather than, for example ergonomic, physical, or chemical.

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NOTICES

17th Annual New England epidemiology summer programme (5 and 10 day courses) June 9–July 4 1997. Tufts University, USA

The New England Epidemiology Institute summer programme at Tufts University's Medford campus includes methodological, statistical, and substantive courses. This programme is intended for those seeking an introduction to modern epidemiological concepts as well as those desiring a review of recent developments in epidemiological thinking.

Twenty five and 10 day courses cover the following: introduction to epidemiology, epidemiologic basis for causal inference, biostatistics for epidemiologists, clinical research, theory and practice of epidemiology,

epidemiology in developing countries, pharmacoepidemiology, meta-analysis, epidemiology in public health practice, clinical trials, survival analysis in epidemiology, decision and cost effectiveness analysis in health care, the biology and epidemiology of cancer, health care use and outcomes research, regression modeling in epidemiology, perinatal epidemiology, occupational and environmental epidemiology, molecular epidemiology and the use of biomarkers, ethics and epidemiology, and writing for publication in a scientific journal. Invited faculty include excellent teachers and prominent researchers from leading universities. Registrants may receive graduate-degree credit or continuing education credits from Tufts University, continuing medical education (AMA category 1) through Tufts University medical School, and certification maintenance from the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

Further information from: The New England Epidemiology Institute, Department PA-OEM, One Newton Executive Park, Newton Lower Falls, MA 02162-1450, USA. Phone: (617) 244-1200; Fax: (617) 244-9669; E-Mail: epidemiol@aol.com; World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.epidemiology.com>

15th Asian conference on occupational health 31 August–3 September 1997. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The theme of the conference is preparing for occupational health and safety needs of the next decade.

For more information on registration and presentation of papers, free communication, and posters at the conference please contact: Conference Secretariat, Society of Occupational & Environmental Medicine of MMA, 4th floor, MMA House, 124 Jalan Pahang, 53000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: (60)(3) 4431740/4431743; Fax: (60)(3) 4418187.

9th International conference on occupational respiratory diseases. 13–16 October 1997. Kyoto International Conference Hall, Japan

The Conference is organised by the Japanese National Organising Committee for the Ninth International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Diseases, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour of Japan, the International Labour Office and the Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association.

This Conference provides an excellent opportunity for scientists, health practitioners, hygienists, engineers, management, workers, and legislators to share experiences and ideas on the management and prevention of occupational respiratory diseases and to set priorities for the next century. The success of the meeting will depend upon contributions of papers and exhibits by leaders in the several disciplines of occupational health. We particularly encourage submissions from junior scientists, as well as from senior investigators.

Themes:

- Epidemiology of occupational respiratory diseases
- Health surveillance of workers exposed to

respiratory hazards

- Aetiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment of occupational respiratory diseases
 - Health hazard assessment by environmental and exposure monitoring
 - Control measures against health hazards at the workplace
 - Respiratory protective equipment
 - Information, education and training on occupational respiratory diseases
- Working Groups:
- ILO international classification of radiographs of pneumoconioses
 - Global action on elimination of silicosis
 - Occupational respiratory allergies
 - Natural and synthetic fibres
 - Relationship between occupational respiratory diseases and lung cancer

Further information from: International Communications Specialists, Kasho Building, 2-14-9 Nihombashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103, Japan.

International symposium on environment, lifestyle, and fertility. 7–10 December 1997. Scandinavian Congress Center, Aarhus, Denmark

The symposium is organised within the framework of Asclepios (a European concerted action on occupational hazards to male reproductive capability).

Two European concerted actions have been launched with the objective of mapping the European occurrence of infertility and identifying occupational hazards to male reproductive function. Dozens of national studies in Europe, the United States, and throughout the world within reproductive epidemiology have provided additional knowledge to add to agreed recommendations for future research. There is a need to identify environmental risk factors as well as suspected factors with none or limited significance for infertility and there is a need to identify studies and methods to be recommended and not recommended.

The symposium will include the following state of the art reviews:

- The use of time to pregnancy in a demographic and epidemiological perspective: *Alfred Spira*
- Design and bias issues related to studies of subfertility: *Jørn Olsen*
- Validity of time to pregnancy data in men and women: *Michael Joffe*
- Semen quality as marker of fecundity in epidemiological studies: *Jens Peter Bonde*
- Endocrine markers of male fecundity: *Richard Sharpe*
- Impact of life style and social factors: *Nel Roeleveld*
- Occupational and environmental impact on fertility: *Steve Schrader*

The symposium is open for free communications related to the above topics and a poster session with plenary review will also be organised. The symposium language is English. Deadline for registration and submission of papers is 1 September 1997.

Further information from: Asclepios, Pia Pors/Jane Boilesen, Department of Occupational Medicine, The Steno Center of Public Health, Aarhus University Hospital, Noerrebrogade 37–39, DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark. Phone: +45 8949 4294; Fax: +45 8949 4260; E-mail: akh.gp22s.akamkpp1@aaa.dk