
Book reviews

The College of Pathologists. Acute Respiratory Diseases. Ed. D. A. J. Tyrrell. (Pp. XII + 134; illustrated; 30s.) Proceedings of a Symposium delivered in London in February, 1968. Supplement No. 2 to the *Journal of Clinical Pathology*. London: British Medical Association.

This was an excellent symposium and it is reassuring to see that the same high standard has been maintained in the subsequent publication. In his preface Tyrrell gives such an apt summary of the proceedings that it really makes a review impossible without some plagiarism.

The subject was introduced by Professor Stuart-Harris who stressed the complexity of the acute respiratory diseases. Investigations during the last 30 years have resulted in some understanding of the interplay between the various infective and environmental factors in the different regions of the respiratory tract. This set the theme for the rest of the symposium. First, the respiratory viruses were considered; Tyrrell classified these organisms. A fairly detailed description of the investigative method was given by Professor N. R. Grist. This was followed by examples of the epidemiological approach. The methods of these studies were described by Dr. D. L. Miller, who clearly covered the various aspects in a paper which acted as a most useful basis for the two papers that followed. Dr. P. G. Higgins discussed the infections in adults and this was complemented by Professor S. D. M. Court's studies in children.

The papers on the mycoplasma followed. Dr. D. Taylor-Robinson gave a comprehensive summary of the properties of these organisms. This was balanced by Dr. H. P. Lambert with a clinical description of the effects of *M. pneumoniae*. Acute respiratory infections in domestic animals were described with particular emphasis on the diseases known to be due to mycoplasma. The fact that most severe diseases usually result from an interaction between several agents, including mycoplasma and viruses, was emphasized. This was covered by Dr. J. H. Darbyshire and Dr. H. Roberts. They were supported by a short paper given by Dr. H. P. Chu, who dealt with the situation in poultry with particular emphasis on the effects of environment in the broiler farms. These bucolic fancies and speculations were rudely interrupted by Dr. K. Austrian with a reminder that pneumococcal pneumonia is still a serious problem in man. This was followed by an interesting group discussion on the part played by viruses in the exacerbations of chronic bronchitis.

Professor Lynne Reid demonstrated that excess mucus production and environmental factors play as important a part as infections in chronic bronchitis. Dr. J. L. Emery, with the support of Professor Keith Simpson, showed that 'cot deaths' are probably a result of virus infection in many cases. The physiological changes were well covered by Professor J. S. Robinson, and Professor J. Pepys dealt with the immunological aspects. Dr. H. Holden produced a good review of the acute respiratory disease following exposure to metal fumes with particular emphasis on the effects of the inhalation of cadmium.

The whole symposium was well balanced between clinical experience and laboratory study. The planning committee are to be congratulated on producing a symposium which was as successful as its predecessor.

J. C. WAGNER

Occupational Disease in California Attributed to Pesticides and Other Agricultural Chemicals - 1966. Prepared by Esther Baginsky, Bureau of Occupational Health, California Department of Public Health, 2151 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94704. (Pp. 25; free). 1966.

This Report deals with occupational disease attributed to agricultural chemicals as reported for the 7.2 million persons covered under the State of California Workmen's Compensation Law. Self-employed persons are not included, so that the magnitude of the problem is probably under-estimated. The very large number of uses to which these chemicals are applied includes insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, defoliants, fertilizers, hormone soil additives, and wood preservatives. The highest number of mishaps was in mosquito-abatement workers.

There were 1,347 cases of disease, of which 478 were irritant and corrosive lesions of the skin and eyes and 869 were in people who were affected by agricultural chemicals, a total slightly higher than that of previous years. Since 1951 there have been 32 fatalities due to the use of these chemicals at work, and 82 children and 22 adults also died from accidental poisoning. Although the non-occupational fatalities were fairly evenly distributed over the organophosphorus pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and other groups, parathion is the most commonly mentioned.

Farm workers account for more than half of the casualties. Gardeners, warehousemen, and plant workers add to the total, but it should be remembered that most pest