Book reviews


This volume has the limited objective of 'highlighting' new developments and findings in the field of industrial hygiene. It consists of a number of review articles which, unlike so many of the uncritical reviews of subjects in the scientific press, give reasoned, expert opinions on the current (1966/67) understandings of the subjects. Some chapters, particularly that on noise, give essentially American viewpoints which may not be wholly applicable to the British scene. Others, notably those dealing with analysis and toxicology, suffer from having subjects too broad for satisfactory review. Those on radiation, both ionizing and non-ionizing, hot environments, ergonomics, and air pollution are excellent.

_Industrial Hygiene Highlights_ will be a valuable addition to the library of those who wish to keep abreast of trans-Atlantic thought, and should be bought as such, rather than as a textbook on the subject.

E. KIng


The area of occupational medicine represented by industrial dermatitis and its fair assessment for disability pension is usually regarded as being difficult. It is therefore particularly welcome to find a monograph devoted to the subject written by a leading dermatologist who is moreover versed in this particular aspect of the law.

The first few chapters deal with the legal mechanisms and procedures under the Industrial Injuries Act. They explain the duties of Medical Boards and of Medical Appeal Tribunals. Such difficult legal conceptions as 'aggravation', 'recrudescence', and 'relevance' are explained and illustrated by clinical case histories.

A chapter of great interest to the doctor in industry deals with the clinical entity, 'Non-infective Dermatitis of External Origin (P.D. 42)'. This eczematous dermatitis is described as 'a catarrhal condition of the skin' which is dependent on two factors - constitutional predisposition and an external factor. It is held to be significant that the majority of the patients start with the affection between the ages of 45 and 55 - the age of many physiological changes. It also means that at this age the worker has been subjected to the wear and tear of the industrial hazard often for 20 years or more.

Mention is made of two special types of industrial dermatitis - gross traumatic dermatitis caused by very strong irritants, and allergic contact dermatitis, a specific skin reaction to a particular substance to which the patient becomes sensitized. It is emphasized that the constitutionally eczematous subject is not more liable to this type of disease than are other people.

A short chapter deals with management, diagnosis, and treatment. A plea is made for early and expert diagnosis and that treatment should be carried out in hospital centres. While agreeing with most of these recommendations, many doctors working in industry will hesitate to accept this advice in toto since many patients treated while still at work (albeit on a different job) do very well, largely no doubt because they are spared financial anxiety, which the author stresses as an important factor in perpetuating the disease.

R. E. LANE


This joint publication of F.A.O. and W.H.O. consists of a series of data on pesticide residues. The following compounds are reviewed: aldrin, carbaryl, carbon disulfide, carbon tetrachloride, chlor dane, DDT, demeton, diazinon, dichiervos, dieldrin, dimethoate, diphenyl, endosulfan, ethylene dibromide, ethylene dichloride, ferbam, heptachlor, hydrogen phosphide, lindane, malathion, mancozeb, manebe, methyl bromide, MGK 264, organomercury compounds, oxydemeton-methyl, parathion, piperonyl butoxide, pyrethrine, thiram, zineb, and ziram. The reviews will be of particular interest to those concerned with hazards to consumers arising from the use of pesticides in production and protection of food.

For each compound an evaluation of acceptable daily intakes, tolerances, and methods for residue analysis are given, followed by a list of references. In some instances toxicological evaluations and diet studies are included in

This report was published after a meeting of the F.A.O. Working Party and W.H.O. Expert Committee, which took place in Rome in December 1967 to discuss pesticide residues.

The report considers methods of estimating tolerances and of sampling for estimating pesticide residues, and it discusses the significance of the interaction of residues, and the difficulties in total diet studies. Several recommendations were made. More studies should be carried out on the toxicity of organochlorine compounds, as some of the compounds persist in the animal and human body, and show effects on the liver at low doses. Some organochlorine compounds produce hepatomas in laboratory animals, and the relevance for man of these findings should be discussed. Recent work on the chronic toxicity of DDT in mice should be evaluated, and any future work considered necessary should be given high priority. Finally it was concluded that more information is needed on patterns of food consumption and about sampling in total diet studies.

The appendices of the report, which make up about half its length, contain recommended values for maximum acceptable daily intakes, tolerances, temporary tolerances, and practical residue limits for 29 insecticides in raw agricultural products. The verbal definitions adopted by the meeting for use in this report are explained in detail. A list is also given of the more recent publications (1965 to 1967) by F.A.O. and W.H.O. on specific compounds.

ELSA REINER


For anyone contemplating a career in general practice this book gives an excellent account of what can be achieved. Dr. McGregor records every encounter with his patients over a period of 12 years in his neatly contained practice, part rural, part town, within 50 miles of Edinburgh. His system of recording, which was also carried out by his assistants and locums, enables him to reproduce the work loads, morbidity, and progress of his patients over this time.

Any family doctor is in a unique position to achieve this continuity which is perhaps the trump card which this branch of the medical profession can produce over the remainder. He tends the day-to-day care of the hopeless cases of inoperable carcinomas which survive for many more months than predicted by the operating surgeons. He is also that much nearer to the tragedies of growing old when family relatives grow callous and demand the dependent's removal to the Infirmary. The point is made that the recuperative powers of the aged but mentally alert are equal to that of a much younger person.

From his records he confirms many long-held theories - that town dwellers of all age groups have twice the incidence of bronchitis when compared with the rural dweller but are less frequently involved with degenerative arterial changes. His records show the decline of pertussis, rheumatic fever, and diphtheria, etc., and the growth of allergies, cancer, and arterial disease.

The range of disease this book deals with is comprehensive and is always spiced with common sense. He accepts as normal the fact that symptoms of a disease are often better the moment the family doctor has been summoned by the responsibility being shared. Those labelled as anxiety states and who frequently attend the surgery rarely lose much time from work and are consequently valued members of the community.

Preventive medicine as applied to general practice includes many novel aspects together with the expected immunization programmes.

This book should encourage those who feel they would like to have a planned approach to medical practice and should be well received by all interested in this subject.

P. M. O. MASSEY


For anyone interested in using family practice as a means of epidemiological study, with the added satisfaction that small, simple but constant flow of recorded observations can give much useful information to the general medical picture, this book is invaluable: for instance, the marked vulnerability of females, of all ages, to urinary infection; the persistence of acute bronchitis in males which throughout life is one third more than females of comparable age; the relative freedom of the male from hypochromic anaemia; and the marked amount of conjunctivitis and blepharitis in children under five.

This book gives a general idea on how to write up any medical subject which interests the practitioner. It gives a method of recording disease by numbered classification conceived by the Royal College of General Practitioners and a number of useful practical suggestions to maintain records whilst visiting patients in their homes.

A particularly useful section was the chapter on how to use a medical library and the help the Librarian can give in tackling any subject. Expert advice on the selection and guidance is offered by the College. A section on elementary statistics and their significance is conspicuously absent in a book of this type but perhaps it was omitted to preserve the interest of the doctor who has always reserved research for others or energetic registrars.

Family practitioners must, nevertheless, regard this