
This is an occupational health book with a difference. The author, an Irishman with an English education, was interested from the first in the relationship of the environment to health. He has worked in Canada, India, West Africa, and Kuwait before taking up the directorship of the Central Middlesex Industrial Health Service. The book follows its theme of the health of people at work to discuss the structure of management and human behaviour in industry. This is succeeded by a simple description of the anatomy of the human frame, illustrated by dramatic drawings of men lifting tallboys, which are supported by a sling round the shoulders. The natural history of accidents and the nature of occupational health disorders are next discussed, and there is a chapter on alcoholism in industry. Respiratory disease, occupational cancer, metals, a few new industrial techniques, rehabilitation, retirement, health screening, and occupational health services all have a chapter each.

This book is rather discursive, full of long quotations, and a lot of it is written in the first person. Not all of it is quite to the point. For example, two pages are taken up by lists of enzymes, which have been shown to be deficient in cases of inborn errors of metabolism. On the other hand, only six pages are allowed in a chapter on occupational health disorders, a subject about which some fat books have been written. Nevertheless, it is an interesting book for the intelligent general reader, and the author has some nice things to say about Newcastle upon Tyne.

R. C. BROWNE


This report contains 11 papers presented at a meeting held in July 1972 and a summary of the discussion. Despite the title it is primarily concerned with techniques for monitoring exposure and the interpretation of results.

The introductory paper presents a first-class review of lead in man and is followed by a series of papers describing the monitoring of lead intake, principally by determination of lead concentration in blood. Four papers describe recent techniques for monitoring blood lead by micromethods, one reviews experience in a commercial hygiene service, and one discusses the interpretation of blood lead results. An experienced company physician succinctly reviews medical supervision problems, and the Factory Inspectorate's views on legislation are presented. Two papers lie outside the main theme; one outlines methods of measuring lead concentrations in the atmosphere (not necessarily related to a worker's intake), and in chimney stacks, making reference to an instantaneous lead sniffer. The other indicates the potential hazard to children arising from contamination reaching the homes of lead workers, and emphasizes that industrial hygiene must also consider the environment around the plant.

The report as a whole presents an excellent review of current knowledge. It will guide those who have to evaluate lead exposure, whether it be to assess risk to men, or to establish or maintain effective control systems. Although the reader is left to make his own selection of analytical method, the clear message is that reliability of analytical results must be regularly confirmed by exchange of samples between laboratories. The reported requirement for laboratories in Sweden to be approved and licensed may help ensure this but may not reduce the risk of contamination of blood samples during collection. Microsamples must be more vulnerable to contamination if taken in an industrial lead environment.

The report helps to emphasize that all monitoring results demand discretion and experience for their safe interpretation. Environmental and biological monitoring has not been adequately exploited in the past. Now there is a risk that controls will be established to meet such standards, while the real objective is forgotten, that is, the health of the worker, of his family, and of people living in the neighbourhood of lead industries.

For an overall view on lead control this report should be read, together with Lead, Code of Practice for Health Precautions, recently prepared by the Department of Employment.

R. J. SHERWOOD


There can be few full-time doctors in industry who do not, on occasion, find themselves in discussion with shop stewards or other union officials. This inexpensive and informative paperback was expressly written as a handbook for workers and it covers a wide range of problems in almost 400 pages. Mr. Kinnersley's style and his outspoken criticisms of management may be considered distasteful (or worse) by some. Doctors do not escape unscathed, viz., 'It is sad to reflect on supposedly humanitarian professions like medicine and sociology when their members can still fear for their jobs if they are seen to side too obviously with those their skills are designed to serve'. The Employment Medical Advisory Service is considered grossly inadequate in size but the nine group industrial health services (including Manchester and Peterborough) escape criticism. The Trades Union Congress's proposals for a national occupational health service are seen as the only satisfactory solution.

The style of the book and the extensive use of heavy type owes much to the tabloid press, but the message is certainly clear. It is tempting to quote extensively to illustrate the point, but I would not wish to spoil an intending reader's appetite by more than: 'Only militant action at shop floor level can bring occupational hazards under control'.

With these reservations, I would recommend this book to those who cannot afford standard texts and who need a compendium of reference on the law relating to industrial diseases, injuries, disablement benefit and compensation, on a wide ranging review of occupational health problems including the evils of shift work, productivity deals and so on, as well as a 45-page glossary of toxic