Book reviews

Contact Dermatitis, 2nd ed. By Alexander A. Fisher. (Pp. 351 + appendix; £8.75) London: Henry Kimpton. 1973.

Since dermatitis is the most common industrial disease, a book dealing with this subject is clearly of interest to the occupational physician. The first edition of Dr. Fisher's book dealt comprehensively with the subject of dermatitis due to both occupational and nonoccupational causes but was probably of greater value to the dermatologist than as a reference book for the occupational physician. The second edition is much more comprehensive and will be exceedingly useful to those practising medicine in industry.

There is a new chapter devoted specifically to industrial dermatitis. In it the question of 'hardening' by the worker to industrial skin hazards is dealt with, the use of patch testing with particular reference to new industrial compounds is stressed, and among hazards those in the plastics field are particularly well covered. The prevention of occupational dermatitis is dealt with rather briefly.

The chapter on noneczematous dermatitis has been enlarged and includes a full discussion of purpuric, urticarial, and lichenoid eruptions. It also deals with specific conditions such as zirconium granuloma. Another example of the detailed nature of this edition is a new and fascinating chapter on the subject of aquatic contact dermatitis.

The book's scope has been greatly increased by inclusion of material from two groups of dermatologists with a special interest in contact dermatitis, namely the North American Contact Dermatitis Research Group and the International Contact Dermatitis Research Group. This has enabled much material to be included on the basis of personal communication before formal publication. The research groups have emphasized the value of a battery of patch test substances in the investigation of contact dermatitis, and a new chapter is added to this second edition on the use of patch test series of this type.

This is an excellent book with a wealth of references concerned with dermatitis. It has an appendix listing more than 800 contact allergens, their source in the environment, and concentrations recommended for patch testing; and colour photographs, some not too natural in tone however, add to the interest of the book. Dr. Fisher's book is strongly recommended as a work of

reference for occupational physicians and can be read easily and with interest.

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Control of Air Pollution in the USSR. By N. F. Izmerov. (Pp. 157; £1.35) WHO Public Health Papers No. 54. Geneva: WHO. 1973.

This booklet of about 150 pages with as many Russian references will be of very great interest to anyone living outside the Eastern bloc who is concerned with the control of air pollution. It is written with great lucidity, which makes reading a pleasure, and gives a broad picture of air pollution studies and control procedures in the USSR.

The first chapter deals with legislation and the history of Tsarist and Soviet organization for pollution control. Following a Council of Ministers decree in 1948, maximum allowable concentrations for 10 substances were confirmed in 1951 as indicators for the evaluation of the purity of urban air. An annex to this report presents the current list of single-occasion and 24-hour average limits for 114 substances. Examples of 24-hour average values are 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for sulphur dioxide and 0.7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for lead, except for the sulphide for which 1.7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ is permitted.

Brief summarized results of numerous studies are given, covering epidemiology related to environmental measurements and analysis of animal tissues following prolonged exposure to polluted atmospheres. Inevitably this section has to cover too much ground for the available space; for example, one finds on facing pages criteria for zoning non-industrial built-up areas and the standard formula for calculating maximum ground level concentrations downwind of a single source of emission. It is to be hoped that much more detailed information will be forthcoming in English to allow assessment of the validity of the reported results.

The second chapter deals with the principles adopted for setting the air quality standards in which emphasis is placed on functional changes that are not necessarily deleterious but still regarded as unacceptable. One criterion is that habituation to harmful substances must be considered as a harmful sign and is proof that the concentration in question is above the permissible level. Particular reference is made to the effect of a pollutant