Book reviews

WHO Expert Committee on Tuberculosis. 9th Report. Technical Report Series 552. (Pp. 40; Price: Sw. fr. 5). Geneva: WHO. 1974.

This report is written mainly for the organizer and administrator in countries in need of a programme for the control of tuberculosis. The majority of its recommendations are intended for the developing nations, as most already apply in the technically advanced nations. It is obviously written by a team of medical experts with considerable knowledge and experience in planning country-wide programmes of tuberculosis control throughout the world. The responsibilities of the programme organizer and his officials, the patient, his contacts, his friends, etc. are all discussed and each is set out in detail. At least half the report is devoted to planning and control of tuberculosis programmes and every aspect is discussed, from the manufacture and storage of BCG to the methods of smear examination of the sputum for acid-fast bacilli and the culture media to be used. Readers in Great Britain are likely to be less enthusiastic about this section than those in the developing countries. Some of the sections contain what seem to be trivial comments which seem unnecessary in a report of this nature; for example, in the section on supervised chemotherapy it states 'the patient's address should be obtained so that if a patient fails to attend, the appropriate action can be taken promptly': however, inclusion of such advice is justifiable on the grounds of completeness.

The section on case finding and treatment of tuberculosis is very restricted. Current reviews of the subject in medical journals of respiratory diseases probably provide the average reader with a better idea of how to treat patients. The WHO report is more concerned with the means of using limited financial resources, limited manpower, and limited supplies of drugs to the fullest use for the greatest number of patients, as should be in the developing nations. On the other hand some British clinicians concerned more about individual patients than national programmes may not agree with certain aspects of the report. For example, it refers to sanatorium treatment as outmoded and unnecessary. This may be appropriate advice to the physicians of the developing nations with a limited budget but institutional treatment is still sometimes desirable if this is the only way to keep a patient taking chemotherapy away from alcohol and bad housing conditions. Perhaps the report overstates the usefulness of fully supervised intermittent chemotherapy compared with daily partially supervised chemotherapy; the former has disadvantages with regard to

efficacy and tolerance. Many British physicians would, in the patient's interests, prefer daily chemotherapy even though this cannot be supervised so completely as the intermittent regimen.

This WHO report is a classical one because of the detail in which the subject is covered, but as a result it makes for rather uninspiring reading. Nevertheless there can be few workers in nations with expanding tuberculosis programmes who can afford not to read it.

A. R. SOMNER

Man under Stress: Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Conference of the Ergonomics Society of Australia and New Zealand, held in the University of Adelaide, 24-25 August 1972. Edited by A. T. Welford. (Pp. 140; £3.50). London: Taylor & Francis. 1974.

This book should prove rewarding to anyone working in the field of occupational medicine and particularly to those who do not claim to be specialists in the field of stress and strain. Attempts to define and quantify the terms 'stress' and 'strain' run as one theme, and the relationship between 'arousal' and 'stress' runs as another theme throughout the 14 contributions. Each paper begins with an admirably short and succinct review of the literature; the results of the author's own work are then shortly presented in a readable and simple manner and the discussions aim to bring the theories back to practical applications and commonplace examples. There is a commendable economy in references although it may put some specialists' noses out of joint; indeed it is noteworthy that Selye's name appears only once in the whole book. The first eight contributions are concerned with theoretical discussion and experimental studies of behaviour under stressful conditions, whereas the last six are more concerned with medical and psychiatric aspects of stress which have ergonomic implications for anyone concerned with designing and controlling working and living conditions.

In the first paper, A. T. Welford examines current ideas on performance under stress in terms of cybernetic principles and theoretical models which he relates to personality differences. He points out the relevance of such work to the caring for students, individuals with creative talents, and those carrying heavy executive responsibility. It is a very well written article in spite of corrected errata. R. W. Cumming and P. G. Croft consider the recovery of performance following overload and its interaction with alcohol, which may have practical implications to the design of road traffic systems. The effects of orientating and defence responses, elicited