
The findings of four years’ research financed by the Department of Health and Social Security for an investigation into the vibration syndrome by the Industries Injuries Advisory Council, following their Interim Report of 1970, are published in this book.

The foreword, by the chairman of a large and well-known industrial group, is of particular interest to occupational health physicians in that it is an excellent statement of an enlightened employer’s approach to industrial health problems. One cannot help remarking on the statement that it ‘should be read by all employers’.

The vibration syndrome itself concerns only a small minority of doctors in industry and relatively few work people. Nevertheless, this is a multidisciplinary study which demonstrates very well the basic nature of occupational medicine and the need for its practitioners to possess a wide knowledge of scientific and technical disciplines, let alone medical ones, and to be able to cooperate with colleagues who know the same subjects in depth. The result is a fascinating and detailed study, which further intrigues in that the details, of concern on a whole only to those with an interest in the vibration syndrome, individually relate to other interests too. For example, the study of bone cysts of the hand and wrist is not only another commentary on the difficulties of accurate diagnostic radiology but also a source of information to radiologists, orthopaedic surgeons, and rheumatologists on the prevalence of these lesions.

Other notable inclusions are a summary of the British Standards Institution Draft for Development on Hand-arm Vibration (DD 43: 1975), a list of valuable references, and an excellent summary of the research project.

The only adverse criticisms one can make of this volume are fairly carping. There is a small toxicology of repetition, almost inevitable when separate papers are gathered together. Long detailed readings of arteriographic examinations in the text are only partially illustrated by reproductions of radiographs in the plates. It would have been better to describe and illustrate the best example fully and relegate other descriptions without illustration to an appendix. In fact, there is a rather unsystematic use of tables in that some are in the text and others in appendices. A better arrangement might have been to insert class results in the text and list individual results in appendices. Turning again to the plates, these are not listed in the contents but are easily found, being bound together. The black and white photographs of processes are good and the colour reproductions of various appearances of vibration white finger, though they do not look very convincing at first sight, improve with patient scrutiny, especially through half-closed eyes (a by-product of patience?). There are useful summaries of conclusions at the end of most chapters but they do not all appear to be justified by the preceding text, presumably expressing experience gathered during the project. Figures 1 and 2 in chapter 1 are difficult to understand as the bars and their cross-hatchings are not explained. There is no index.

This book should be widely read not only by students of occupational health but also by mature practitioners of occupational medicine, physicians, surgeons, and engineers who wish to enlarge their view of the effects of working processes on man and how to get to grips with them.

To the reviewer there remains an unresolved problem. After such lucid evidence for the induction of vibration white finger at work, how did it remain unprescribed?

John Rich

NOTICES

Industrial Audiometry Course

A three-day course on industrial audiometry is to be held on 15-17 December 1976, at the Wendover Hotel, Monton, Eccles. It will offer basic training in audiometry for industrial medical staff, safety officers, and others concerned with hearing in industry. Attention will be paid to problems of practical screening audiometry in industry in the assessment of hearing for both new entrants to noisy employment and existing workers.

The course will include lectures on the theory of audiometry, audiometric methods, accuracy of results, interpretation of data, detection of malingering, and available techniques for the prevention of hearing loss. Assessment of handicap, detection of non-organic hearing loss, legal liability, and current noise legislation will also be covered. Practical work will include the use of manual and automatic audiometers, care and calibration of audiometers, and practice sessions on audiometry using both simulated and live subjects.

Because of the intensive nature of the course and the emphasis placed upon practical work the number of participants will be limited to not more than 20.

Further information may be obtained from Dr N. S. Yeowart, 8 Clay Lane, Norden, Rochdale.

International Congress on Toxicology

The Society of Toxicology will hold its Annual Meeting at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, from 27-30 March 1977. Further information may be obtained from Gale C. Boxill, PhD, Wyeth Laboratories, Box 861, Paoli, Pennsylvania, USA.