him giddy. A coronary thrombosis or a complete heart block should be notified to the Licensing Centre because these are 'prospective' disabilities which may in time become 'relevant' ones. The distinction between the two is not always clear. Diabetes in itself is neither prospective nor relevant but if controlled by insulin becomes a prospective disability. Epilepsy is a relevant disability and is a bar to driving a private car for three years and public service or heavy goods vehicle driving for life. Multiple sclerosis, on the other hand is a prospective disability, and as such must be notified, but sufferers may drive during remissions.

There is an excellent chapter on the effect of drugs on driving ability. No fewer than 35% to 50% of motorists drive at least once a year after taking psychotropic drugs, often in association with alcohol. Most of them say they have not been warned of the dangers by their doctors. Neither MIMS nor the National Formulary give specific references of the effects of most drugs on driving. Driving may not be impaired by small doses of tranquillisers, but tricyclic antidepressants, monoamine oxidase inhibitors, antihistamines, and analgesics such as Distalgesic do have an effect, and patients taking them should be warned by their doctors. Public service drivers should be given sick leave until it is seen that they have no reactions to these drugs. The effects of fatigue in long-distance driving is discussed in detail. A rest after three hours' driving abolishes fatigue with complete recovery and improved performance; after six hours' driving recovery is uncertain, and after nine some hours of sleep are needed for recovery.

There is as much information about disease, drugs, and driving as anyone is likely to need, but doctors unassisted by complex problems are invited to discuss them with the Medical Advisory Branch of the Licensing Centre. Its telephone number is supplied in the penultimate paragraph of the book.

Andrew Smith


The title of this book is misleading without the subtitle and it would have been better to have recognised this. Statistical variability is an important characteristic of human beings and consequently of patients but it is very far from being the major theme of medical research.

The body of the text is confined to 124 pages in which space the author attempts to cover most of the elementary statistical methods plus the techniques and results of epidemiology and clinical trials. A further 44 pages contain appendices of tables and technical notes on some of the statistical points and a reprint of the MRC leaflet on responsibility in investigations on human subjects.

As there are many figures and diagrams the author has left himself very little space to discuss a large and highly technical subject. I do not think he has been very successful and I feel he would have written a much better book if he had devoted more space to exposition and less to technical methods. As it stands, the book should be read in conjunction with a statistical textbook and not as a substitute for one, as the technical discussion of methods is sketchy and in places misleading. For example, the chapter on correlation and regression seems to me very confusing for a beginner as it begins with a discussion of classical Galtonian regression and goes on, almost tangentially, to the commoner and simpler case of regression of a dependent variable on one selected dependent variable or more. It also makes the bald statement that variables must be normally distributed for a correlation analysis to be possible, which is as it stands simply not true.

Other doubtful assertions that strike the eye may be quoted:

'The parameter which is measured is called a variate' p. 1. The distinction between a parameter and a variate is fundamental in statistics.

'There is no way to prove mathematically that the normal law describes experimental errors; it is simply an observed fact that it does so' p. 16. Perhaps 'sometimes' should be inserted between 'it' and 'does'.

'Variation of height and weight... can be predicted by the normal distribution' p. 17. Weight is not normally distributed and in any case, given that one of these distributions is normal, the other could not.

It is stated that the hyperbolic confidence limits of a regression line are due to small numbers of observations at outlying values, p. 80. This is not so. It is due to the fact that random errors in estimating the regression coefficient have larger effects at greater distances from the mean.

The standard errors of some simple mathematical expressions are given without indicating that they only apply to uncorrelated variables, p. 131. The formula for the error of a ratio is wrong.

This book is worth browsing through for examples of statistical method but the methods themselves should be learnt elsewhere.

C. C. Spicer


The Division of Occupational Health and Radiation Control, Health Commission of New South Wales, organised a seminar on Occupational Health and Safety in Hospitals, held one knows not where, and this is a typescript account of the proceedings.

The 90 participants are listed at the end but it is not stated how they came to be gathered together. There were doctors, nurses, other medical workers, health and hospital administrators, and safety officers among them. Four were from private industry but the rest came from various government or similar departments. About 50% were administrators, medical or otherwise, but justifiably so when the objective seems to have been to sell the concept of occupational health and safety services to the hospital service.

The list of contents is inviting for although the formal papers have somewhat hackneyed titles, the reports of the eight group discussions promise something of substance, such as 'What are the physiological hazards to which hospital staff may be exposed?' Though 'physiological' turns out to be 'psychological' in the report itself, and there are a number of similar misprints, this is unimportant compared with the disappointingly naive presentations and group reports, especially emphasised in the latter by summarising them later in tabular form. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that an account of a seminar of this kind is not intended as a reference work and the participants were largely only being introduced to the subject.

Miss N. Bundle's contribution on Occupational Health Services for Hospital Staff acknowledges indebtedness to the Tunbridge Report in giving a good account of the ideal. Hospital Health Services, from Dr J. Toolley is a useful
summary of advantages and disadvantages. Incidentally, the five references (three to Tunbridge) quoted in the former paper are virtually the only ones given in the publication. The most interesting section for the practising UK occupational health doctor is the 18-page general discussion and conclusion, for it is seen that the enthusiasms and doubts that are raised here are matched in New South Wales. It is worthwhile reading this part as it reminds one of problems to be solved and issues not yet squarely faced.

JOHN RICH


In 1968 a survey of the pottery industry was proposed, in order to establish the prevalence of pneumoconiosis and other respiratory disease, and to relate it to type of work, age, sex, length of employment, and smoking habits. This brief report summarises that survey, in which respiratory questionnaire, vitalograph, radiography, and occupational history were recorded for about 6,000 employees. Concentrations of respirable dust (both total and quartz alone) were measured on 600 occasions in 280 different jobs and were found to exceed the total lung volume in 50 of them. The number of workers in these 50 jobs is not given but it appears to be about 300. The only specific job mentioned as having a high exposure to silica is glaze-spraying, but various jobs in the preparation of material and body, in wall-tile pressing, and 'industrial-other' also carried this risk. Glaze-spraying and the preparation-work were associated with both excess respiratory symptoms and radiological abnormality, but in most other instances the symptoms were associated with smoking or previous work in collieries, and radiological abnormalities were also related to previous dusty work. The prevalence of pneumoconiosis was only 1-6% (2-6% in men and of chronic bronchitis only 1-9%). Pneumoconiosis was not related to smoking, but respiratory symptoms, and reduction of both FEV and FVC were related to smoking and to increasing age. The prevalence of chronic bronchitis was related to total dust concentration, and the FEV tended to be reduced in those workers who were exposed to the highest concentration of quartz.

There are one or two discrepancies between text and tables and the discussion of the findings has been so compressed (in the interests of brevity) that it is difficult to follow. Moreover the authors seem uncertain of their conclusions, which are often expressed in the form 'would indicate' or 'might suggest'. This is unkind to the reader who does not have access to the original material and cannot draw his own conclusions. One is left with a feeling of disappointment that so extensive an investigation has produced such indefinite results. It is hoped that repetition of the survey in 1980 will be more rewarding.

G. L. LEATHART

Notices

Industrial Laboratory Health and Safety
The Centre for Extension Studies at Loughborough University of Technology will hold the next in its series of short courses from 3-7 April 1977. The course is intended primarily for industrial laboratory managers who wish to improve their understanding of legal, technical, and management aspects; it will cover chemical, biological, electrical, mechanical, and radiation hazards.

The course fee will be £95 including accommodation. Further information may be obtained from the Centre for Extension Studies, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TU.

Second International Course in Industrial Toxicology
The Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki, and the Finnish Association of Industrial Medicine, are organising this course which will take place at the Hanasaari Cultural Centre, Helsinki from 8-14 August 1977. Registrations should be sent to Dr Harri Vainio by 1 May and a maximum of 50 participants will be accepted. A degree in medicine, chemistry, pharmacology, technology, or some related field is required. The participant should be familiar with basic biochemistry and general research methods; he should possess a good knowledge of English, as the course will be conducted in that language. The course fee will be £250, excluding meals and accommodation. All registrants will be asked to pay an initial fee of £50 upon registration.

Further details may be obtained from: Dr Harri Vainio, MD, Department of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology, Institute of Occupational Health, Haartmaninkatu 1, 00290 Helsinki 29, Finland.

Fourth International Advanced Course in Epidemiological Methods
The Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki is organising a course in epidemiological methods with special reference to occupational health problems. The course is open to research workers from all countries and will comprise lectures and exercises on epidemiological methods, such as study designs, sampling, control of confounding, and data analysis. The participants should bring with them problems that can be discussed during the course.

The course will take place from 15-26 August 1977 and a maximum of 30 participants will be accepted. A degree in medicine, statistics, sociology, technology, or some related field is required. The participants should be familiar with general research methods and possess a good knowledge of English, the language in which the lectures will be given.

The course fee will be £250, excluding meals and accommodation. All registrants will be asked to pay an incidental fee of £75 upon notification that they have been accepted.

The course will be held at the Institute of Occupational Health, Haartmaninkatu, and further details may be obtained from Mr Markku Nurminen, LSc, Bureau chief, Department of Epidemiology and Biometry, Institute of Occupational Health, Haartmaninkatu 1, 00290 Helsinki 29, Finland. The closing date for registrations is 15 March 1977.

Prix International René Barthe 1978
Le Prix René Barthe est destiné à récompenser un travail récent, original, concernant la Médecine du Travail ou l’Hygiène Industrielle. Les travaux personnels d’auteurs de toute nationalité peuvent être présentés.

Ce Prix, d’un montant de 8.000 F., est décerné tous les trois ans, à l’occasion des Congrès Internationaux de Médecine du Travail, organisés sous les auspices de la Commission Internationale Permanente de Médecine du Travail.
