

## Book review

**Occupational and Industrial Dermatology.** Edited by Howard I Maibach and Gerald A Gellin. (Pp 375; £38.50.) Chicago, London; Year Book Medical Publishers Inc, 1982.

This volume is in effect the proceedings of a symposium on industrial and plant dermatology held in San Francisco in March 1979. It is edited from the department of dermatology of the School of Medicine of California University and has over 30 contributors from Europe and the United Kingdom as well as from the United States. The editors state that it is intended as a primer and intermediate text in occupational dermatology not only for practising physicians but for other health professionals concerned in the recognition, treatment, and prevention of occupational dermatology.

The large number of authors and the wide spectrum of possible readers has inevitably lead to an unevenness both in length of article and level of information contributed. In section 1 chapters on "The use and abuse of the patch test" by C D Calnan and on the "Occupational site sur-

vey" by R J G Rycroft are simple, short, and didactic, whereas the chapter by L Polak from the department of research of Hoffman-La Roche on "The immunological considerations in allergic contact dermatitis" is long and detailed, copiously illustrated by diagrams, but not entirely easy to follow without a basic knowledge of immunology.

Many of the authors give passing reference to the treatment of the disorders they are discussing but there is a good didactic article on the subject by Ernst Epstein of California, but with no discussion on the difficult problem of when to recommend a change of work.

The second section of the manual deals with dermatotoxicology, and is principally devoted to methods of determining the allergic contact potential of chemicals. Magnusson, Fregert, and Wahlberg give an account of predictive testing both on human volunteers and in animals. The predictive tests on man are more fully discussed by Marzulli and Maibach in the following chapter. While British readers may raise their eyebrows at the thought of 200 volunteers being used to test substances for

the Research Institute of Fragrance Materials, the sensitising potential of useful therapeutic substances such as neomycin or lanolin certainly merit investigation.

The final section is devoted to problems of specific industries, particularly the problems in the processing of plastics; here the reader would do well to brush up his organic chemistry before embarking on the discussion by Malten. In a textbook remarkable for the number of lists given as tables, he will find a page-long list of sensitising plastomers. There are also interesting and informative articles on the epoxy resin acrylic and other resins.

A detailed account is given of the comparatively new processes in the printing plate industry, here there are some 20 different systems, each containing one or more resins as well as auxiliary substances. Diagnosis of suspected allergic dermatitis in a worker from this industry does indeed call for a very detailed knowledge of the process.

It is suspected that this volume will be more used for reference for this type of problem than as a general textbook.

MURIEL L NEWHOUSE

## Notice

### **4th International Congress on Industrial and Environmental Neurology**

24-26 September 1984 in Prague, Czechoslovakia

This meeting will be organised by the Czechoslovak Medical Society J E Purkyně and it is expected that the congress will be attended by about 250 scientific and clinical specialists from abroad and from Czechoslovakia. Inquiries for further particulars should be addressed to the Czechoslovak Medical Society, J E Purkyně, Vítězného února 31, 120 26 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia.