

Book reviews

Laboratory decontamination and destruction of carcinogens in laboratory wastes—some hydrazines. (IARC No 54.) (£7.97.) **Laboratory decontamination and destruction of carcinogens in laboratory wastes—some N-nitrosamides.** (IARC No 55.) (£6.95.) London; Oxford University Press, 1984.

The laboratory manipulation of materials inevitably gives rise to waste, both as the byproducts and end products of processes and from accidental spillage. The method and route of disposal of laboratory waste depends on the nature and quantity of the material, on statutory legislation, and on the resources and facilities available. When the waste is hazardous consideration must be given to neutralising the hazard before the waste material is discharged into the sewers, the landfill site, or the atmosphere. Potent carcinogens in the laboratory constitute hazards to those handling the material, the waste, and also hazards of contamination of the environment. Furthermore, carcinogens give rise to considerable public anxiety which, questions of toxicity apart, should receive the concern of those responsible for the generation and management of laboratory wastes.

The two publications from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (54 & 55) that provide authoritative information on laboratory decontamination and destruction of carcinogens—specifically hydrazines and N-nitrosamides—in laboratory wastes provide an excellent source of guidance and practical information, and these publications augment the previous publications describing disposal methods for aflatoxins, N-nitrosamines, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. The series is planned to include also publications on halogenated ethers and aromatic amines. Both publications being considered here detail the specific carcinogens considered; the hydrazines being—hydrazine, methylhydrazine, 1,1-dimethylhydrazine, 1,2-dimethylhydrazine, and procabazine hydrochloride; and the N-nitrosamides being — N-nitroso-N-methylurea, N-nitroso-N-ethylurea, N-nitroso-N-methylurethane, N-nitroso-N-ethylurethane, and N-nitroso-N'-nitro-N-methylguanidine. The publications then provide basic introductions detailing carcinogenicity data on the compounds and analytical methods which are commonly applied to the compounds. The degradation techniques are then listed and are described in detail in a methods index. Finally the publications have appendices giving further data on nomenclature and chemical and physical properties

of the compounds, together with appendices of further studies relevant to degradation techniques. The information in both publications is supplemented by comprehensive bibliographies.

These publications provide an invaluable source of reliable and technically exact information for anyone concerned with the evolution of safety strategies for handling specific carcinogens and for the management of specific carcinogens in laboratory wastes.

M R BAILEY

Occupational Lung Diseases. 2nd ed. W K C Morgan and A Seaton, eds. (£39.50.) Philadelphia; W B Saunders Co, 1984. **Occupational Lung Disease.** J B L Gee, ed. (£30.00.) London; Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

The appearance of two new books on occupational lung disease serves to underline the importance of this subject for occupational physicians, many of whom will already use Parkes's splendid book as their source of reference. Of the two, the book edited by Gee makes the more interesting reading. It begins with an account of the effects of exogenous materials on the connective tissue of the lung and then has a couple of chapters on asbestos and one on non-asbestos fibres. The remaining chapters cover occupational asthma, silicosis, extrinsic allergic alveolitis, beryllium disease, and three useful and informative chapters on byssinosis. The penultimate chapter on medical monitoring is disappointing, and the final chapter, on the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, will prove to have limited appeal.

The Morgan and Seaton book seems to me to contain rather a lot of redundant chapters which take up much of the first 250 pages. I see little virtue in including chapters on pulmonary physiology, dust deposition, epidemiology, the measurement of dusts and fumes, or on respiratory protection in a book that is presumably aimed at clinicians who, if they are interested in these matters, can find them dealt with more comprehensively elsewhere. The purely clinical chapters of the book are, in general, excellent; I particularly liked the chapters on occupational asthma and asbestos related diseases which are better than those in Parkes. It is interesting that each of the editors appears as contributor in the "rival" volume.

Neither book is cheap and my advice to those who already own Parkes is to go for Gee; if you haven't got Parkes, then buy Morgan and Seaton as your stand by and borrow Gee for a good read.

H A WALDRON