

plastics. Another interesting chapter is on dermatitis in the forest products industry. Inevitably, poison ivy dermatitis is described at length, not a relevant problem in the United Kingdom but of considerable general interest.

Dermatologists working in occupational dermatoses will probably find this book useful for reference and helpful when dealing with cases of contact dermatitis where the causative agent is particularly difficult to identify.

MURIEL NEWHOUSE

Textbook of occupational medicine. Edited by J K Howard and F H Tyer. (Pp 509; £60.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1987.

In most branches of medicine there is a spectrum of books ranging from authoritative text books on the one hand that are used only for reference to more didactic, easily portable volumes that are used from day to day. There are, however, plenty in the middle and it is into the middle that Howard and Tyer's book falls since it certainly is not a comprehensive text book.

There has been a spate of middle range books on occupational medicine of late and I have to say that I do not think that the present one adds anything important to the list and it is somewhat pricier than many.

The authors have had the admirable intent of covering as wide a range of topics as they could but they have stinted on space so that their contributors are not able to do justice to their subject, certainly not in the way which one would like to see in a text book. I can see that this book might be used for those studying for the AFOM or some similar examination unless they chose to use one of the cheaper alternatives which would do them almost as well. I do not see it being used at all as a reference volume.

There are several errors of commission in the book—one I disliked particularly was the confusion of Legge's first name—but the book suffers mostly from errors of omission. The chapter on chemical hazards is too skimpy to be really useful and so is the one on statistics. Another feature that may limit the appeal of the book is its parochial nature; some of the chapters at the beginning of the book deal with occupational health law and practice in the UK but have little to say about the situation elsewhere.

This book has been a long time in the making and we have heard about its appearance for many months. I am sorry to have to say that I was disappointed when it finally arrived and I cannot recommend it with any enthusiasm.

H A WALDRON

Prevention of neurotoxic illness in working populations. Edited by B L Johnson. Published for WHO by John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1987.

Small books written by 50 contributors seldom turn out to be as readable as this which is a considerable recommendation to the editor. Anyone who wishes to make a start in occupational neurotoxicology would do well to begin here since the book reviews most of present knowledge concisely and with a great many references. Different approaches to the study of neurotoxic illness in the workplace are given and the chapter on epidemiological methods is a model of its type.

The sections on test methods concentrate rather too heavily on symptom questionnaires and psychological tests, reflecting the tendency to base what is often a psychiatric diagnosis—as in the case of the so called solvent induced organic syndromes—on the results of the subject's subjective impression or his performance in psychometric tests rather than on a proper psychiatric evaluation. Throughout the book there is a notable lack of psychiatric input to balance that of the epidemiologists, neurologists, and psychologists; mention should have been given to case finding instruments such as the general health questionnaire or to the present state examination.

What is also lacking is any sense of how serious a matter neurotoxic illness really is among people at work. Judging from the papers that have appeared in this journal over the past five years or so, it is neither common nor grave. Or am I misjudging the issue entirely? There is no doubt that it has considerable survival value for many academically based epidemiologists but I wonder how far it impinges on either the workers themselves or those who have responsibility for their day to day care either at work or elsewhere?

Nevertheless, this is a useful addition and one which will no doubt set off several hounds in search of neurotoxic hares.

H A WALDRON

Work-related lung disorders. Edited by J E Cotes and J Steel. (£65.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987.

It is an interesting idea to have a book on occupational lung disease written jointly by a physician and a hygienist but in doing so the authors seem slightly to have obscured their target. Reading it, I was not clear who would benefit most. It is extremely clear and lucid, however, and one cannot say that for many text books these days, and it does give the proper emphasis, concentrating less on the classic diseases and more on those seen in the modern workplace.

The section on examination techniques is clear and informative but I cannot say the same of the one on epidemiological surveys which I did not find particularly helpful.

There are some lovely illustrations with excellent radiographs and CT scans which have reproduced extremely well. The many references to each chapter provide the reader with as much further information as he is likely to require.

The pleasant style and the quality of the illustrations gives the book a certain appeal and I hope it does well. I am alarmed by the price, however, which places it beyond the reach of any students or indeed almost anyone who has to pay for it themselves.

H A WALDRON

Notices

Seventh Annual Epidemiology Summer Programme, Tufts University, Medford, MA, 24 July–12 August 1988

The New England Epidemiology Institute and Tufts University will sponsor a three week summer programme in epidemiology. The programme includes both methodological and substantive courses intended for those seeking an introduction to modern epidemiological concepts as well as those desiring a review of recent developments in epidemiological thinking. Twelve courses will be offered including theory and practice of epidemiology (introductory and advanced levels), biostatistics, regression and categorical data methods, logistic regression and survival analysis, clinical epidemiology, nutritional epidemiology, injury epidemiology, occupational and environmental epidemiology, reproductive and perinatal epidemiology, and the biology and epidemiology of cancer. Registrants may receive graduate degree credit, continuing medical education credit (AMA Category 1) through the Postgraduate Medical Institute, or certification maintenance credits in industrial hygiene. For more information contact: The New England Epidemiology Institute, Dept SC-7, PO Box 57, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167, USA.

3rd International Conference on Environmental Contamination, Venice, 26–29 September 1988

This conference will deal with the movement of environmental contaminants in air, soil, and water. For further information please contact the Secretariat, 3rd International Conference on Environmental Contamination, CEP Consultants Ltd, 26–28 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QH.

Hazardous substances; a European Update, Manchester, 19 May 1988

A one day symposium organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry will be held on Thursday 19 May 1988 at Manchester Polytechnic. Speakers will discuss EEC legislation, current and future, governing the control of hazardous substances, and how such legislation may affect companies in the United Kingdom. The six topics to be discussed are: the European Communities future health and safety action programme; the classification and labelling of hazardous substances; proposed European Communities legislation on monitoring of hazardous substances; hazardous substances: an employee/trades union view, the consumer's view, and the chemical industry view. For further information, please contact Mr R W Hazell, Health, Safety and Environment Officer, The Royal Society of Chemistry, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0BN.

Courses in "Industrial Audiometry", Manchester, 18–20 May 1988

A course in "Industrial Audiometry" to be held at the Wendover Hotel, Eccles, Manchester, offers training in audiometry for industrial medical staff, safety officers, and others concerned with hearing in industry. It covers both the theory and practice of audiometry, together with lectures on audiometric methods, the accuracy of data, interpretation and assessment of audiograms, and legal aspects. Practical work will include the use of manual, self-recording, and computerised instruments. Further details and application forms from: Dr W Tempest, 'Kismet,' Croyde Rd, St Annes, Lancs FY8 1EX.