Pulmonary function tests. A guide for the student and house officer. Edited by A Miller. (\$29.50; 275 pp.) Orlando: Grune and Stratton Inc, 1987.

This represents an abbreviated version of *Pulmonary function tests in clinical and occupational lung diseases* by the same authors. It omits discussion of the use of lung function tests in other than the clinical setting and is intended for students and junior doctors. Eight chapters from the larger version are omitted: those on lung mechanics, small airways function, reference values, control of respiration, respiratory muscles, and epidemiological and occupational aspects. Remaining chapters are simplified in parts. The layout in this book is better and clearer than in the larger volume, while much of the good illustrative material has been retained. The references are sufficient to take the interested reader further. As in the larger book the strongest chapters are on interpretation of test results and the weakest is that on respiratory disability and impairment.

There are many similar introductions to lung function tests available for the non-specialist. This one, however, has a good approach to the subject and would make a good choice.

ANNE COCKCROFT

Health Problems of Health Care Workers. Edited by EA Emmett. (£19.95; 654 pp.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987.

Like others in the "Occupational medicine: state of the art reviews" series, this book comprises a collection of review articles. The introduction makes the point that, although it is easy to identify several occupational health hazards for health care workers (HCWs) in the United States, the provision of occupational health services for these workers is relatively recent and still expanding. This is also much the case in Britain and much of the content of the book is relevant to Britain. There are exceptions: the role of HCWs is clearly different in some respects in an American style private health care system and reference is made, for example, to hospitals becoming more competitive. But perhaps

this is the shape of things to come in Britain. There is an emphasis throughout the book on those HCWs with clinical contact, especially doctors and nurses. This is a pity as ancillary workers in British hospitals certainly have their share of occupational health problems. Perhaps their omission reflects the subcontracting of ancillary services to outside employers, a trend that is increasing in Britain also.

The risk of HCWs contracting infections through their work is clearly an important consideration and the first four reviews concern infectious hazards for HCWs. The article on HIV transmission in the health care setting is prominent as the first article. In most British hospitals, other than big city teaching hospitals, this is not yet perceived as a major issue. Nevertheless, this chapter is useful as a summary of current knowledge and as a source of references, as is the following chapter about prevention of hepatitis B in HCWs. The choice of subjects for review reflects most of the areas of current interest in the subject, including indoor air quality problems, hazards of handling cytotoxic drugs, chemical dependency, and stress in HCWs. The chapter on stress is disappointing, offering little in the way of an appraisal of methods of dealing with this problem. Another rather negative contribution is that about back pain in hospital workers which suggests, without evidence, that an ergonomic approach will not succeed in the health care setting. The chapter on allergy to laboratory animals is thorough but rather out of place in the context of the book. Perhaps no collection of reviews about health problems of laboratory workers is planned. The final chapter and appendix are recommendations for the organisation of hospital occupational health services; they are mainly a series of lists and there is much repetition. There are transatlantic differences: provision of a non-occupational health service for employees is not appropriate in British hospitals.

As with any collection of articles, the quality varies. Overall, however, this book may be recommended, especially to the many part time practitioners (without formal occupational health training) who still provide most of the medical input into occupational health services for British HCWs and to the nurses who provide much of the service.

ANNE COCKCROFT