
BOOK REVIEW

Compensation for Industrial Disease.
By N J WIKLEY (Pp 221; price £35). 1993.
Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot,
Hampshire: Dartmouth Publishing Co.
ISBN 1-855-21264-1.

The patient disabled by industrial disease not infrequently gets bad advice. Few doctors understand compensation law and few lawyers fully comprehend the niceties of medical diagnosis. But, even worse, doctors acting as expert witnesses may become so identified with one party in litigation that medical objectivity is lost (for example, in my recent experience, disabilities caused by atrial septal defect, motor neurone disease, and left ventricular failure have been attributed to asbestos pleural fibrosis), whereas lawyers may be ignorant of health and safety and compensation law. There is thus a real need for a good book on the subject.

This is that good book. It was with some foreboding that I picked it up, as it illustrates the complexities of compensation law by reference to asbestos, a subject that is rarely treated with objectivity. However, as I read the early chapters on the context of industrial disease and on asbestos, exposure to asbestos, and disease, it became clear that the author, an academic lawyer, had a real understanding of the medical issues. Later chapters describe the systems of compensation through industrial injuries legislation and the law of tort, as well as the extremely complex British system of disablement benefits under Social Security legislation. All those matters are discussed in terms of their historical development, the author's archival research having revealed much of interest in this context. Further chapters discuss the way the law works in

practice, pointing to the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two systems of compensation, and ending with some suggestions as to how matters might be improved.

The business of occupational physicians is primarily to prevent industrial disease. When such disease does occur, we have a responsibility to give the patient objective and sound advice, based on clinical skills in assessing disability and on knowledge of relevant legislation. This book provides the latter, but provides it in an interesting and readable manner. It is of equal interest to, and should be read by, doctors who write medical reports and lawyers who deal with claims, and can be bought for a small fraction of the fee usually charged.

ANTHONY SEATON

NOTICE

International course on cancer epidemiology with emphasis on occupational cancer, UFPEL-Departamento de Medicina Social, Pelotas, Brazil. 22 August-2 September 1994

The International Agency for Research on Cancer in collaboration with the Department of Social Medicine, Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil is organising a course on cancer epidemiology with special emphasis on occupational cancer. The course is intended for public health, occupational health, and cancer research workers. The course will consist of lectures, practical examples and exercises.

The topics to be covered in the course include:

- Basic statistical methods
- Basic epidemiological methods
- Types of epidemiological studies, with special emphasis on case-control studies
- Exposure assessment, with special emphasis on occupational and environmental exposures
- Bias, confounding and stratified analysis
- Advanced statistical methods.

The faculty of the course will include: Paolo Boffetta, IARC, Lyon, France—scientific programme coordinator; Harvey Checkoway, University of Washington, Seattle, USA; Luiz A Facchini, UFPEL, Pelotas, Brazil—local organiser; Eduardo L Franco, Institut Armand Frappier, Laval, Quebec, Canada; Manolis Kogevinas, IARC, Lyon, France; Benedetto Terracini, University of Torino, Italy.

The working language of the course will be English and participants will be expected to have a sufficient knowledge of spoken and written English. No charge will be made for the course, but candidates will be expected to find their own support for travel and accommodation in Pelotas. Some financial support will be available for a limited number of selected participants.

Further information and application forms may be obtained from:

The Unit of Education and Training,
International Agency for Research on
Cancer,

150, cours Albert Thomas,
F-69372 Lyon Cedex 08—France
Tel (33)72.73.84.85

Fax (33)72.73.85.75

(for non-Brazilian applicants)

or

Departamento de Medicina Social,
Faculdade de Medicina,
Universidade Federal de Pelotas,
Caixa Postal 464,

96100 Pelotas RS—Brazil

Tel (55)532.71.24.42

Fax (55)532.71.26.45

(for Brazilian applicants)

Closing date for applications 31 May 1994.