

- *Worksite health promotion—counteracting stress and burnout*
27–31 May 1996, Hotel Strandbo, Nauvo, Finland
- *Optical radiation in the work environment*
3–7 June 1996, Saariselkä Fell Hotel, Ivalo, Finland
- *Molecular mechanisms of environmental mutagenesis and carcinogenesis*
3–8 June 1996, Novum Research Park, Huddinge (Stockholm), Sweden
- *Epidemiological data analysis and inference*
19–30 August 1996, Hanasaari Cultural Centre, Espoo (Helsinki), Finland
- *Sick-building syndrome in the office environment—measurements and evaluation*
26–30 August 1996, Schaeffergaarden, Gentofte (Copenhagen), Denmark
- *Continuous quality improvement in OHS*
11–13 September 1996, Hotel Långholmen, Stockholm, Sweden
- *Risk assessment of carcinogens*
20–22 September 1996, Silja Serenade (on the ferry Stockholm-Helsinki-Stockholm)
- *Occupational contact and inhalation allergy—exposure, risk assessment and prevention*
4–8 November 1996, Vilvorde Course Centre, Charlottenlund (Copenhagen), Denmark
- *NIVA Baltic courses in occupational health and safety*
Autumn 1996, Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, Tallinn, Estonia
Further information from: NIVA, Topeliuksenkatu 41 a A, FIN-00250 Helsinki, Finland. Tel: +358 0 47471; Fax: +358 0 4747 497.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: R L Maynard

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Cancer Treatment: fourth edition. Edited by HASKELL. (Pp 1229, price £110.) 1995. Philadelphia: WB Saunders. ISBN 0-7216-4907-6.

The goal of this volume is to provide an authoritative, comprehensive, scholarly appraisal of contemporary treatment, a common aim of the 10 or so such big cancer books available. United States and United Kingdom versions have been quite different but this one seems to be user friendly, as if

the bridge between them is shortening.

In response to the trend for the treatment of people with cancer to become increasingly multidisciplinary, an ever widening variety of team members need access to an overview of each tumour site, and perhaps also to the general principles of the subject, to brief themselves for dialogue with colleagues from other specialties. This book will do such a job and is also suited to students for post-graduate exams; it is technically up to date with plenty of relevant references up to 1994, and good value for money. Nursing and psychosocial interventions are covered in short special chapters rather than integrated into discussion of what can now be offered for specific tumour sites. Mention of aetiology and occupational considerations is rightly (given the title) limited to a brief vehicle for references.

Most of the authors are associates of the University of California at Los Angeles and specialists in treating tumours with chemotherapy; it is in this area that the book is authoritative and useful to practising oncologists. They are sufficiently close to their subjects when discussing specific tumour sites to also summarise diagnostic criteria and the roles and results of surgical and radiation treatment although they give few technical details (beyond radiation dose) of practice in these areas. A major plus is the fresh scholarly approach evident in the text relating to competing chemotherapy schedules. Unfortunately actual data on risk ratios and confidence intervals, as called for in the chapter on interpretation of data, and which are necessary to judge how much difference there may be between treatments, are generally still just not available. Thus although the text is critical, the coy "studies have shown x to be superior to y" recurs all too frequently.

Those with a practice built on evidence based medicine in a socialised system may have some of their conditioning pleasantly challenged by reading that the golden rule "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is under pressure on the West Coast of the United States from a platinum rule "do unto others as they would have you do unto them". Irrespective of any bias introduced by the transfer of heavy metals, the willingness of patients to become more involved in treatment decisions continues its welcome growth. Accessible information of this quality is not yet available electronically, and this big book is definitely not obsolete.

A BULMAN

Topics in Biological Monitoring (a compendium of essays by members of the ACGIH Biological Exposures Indices Committee). (Pp 99). 1995. Cincinnati: American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists Incorporated. ISBN 1-882417-10-0.

This collection of essays is dedicated to Dr Vera Fiserova-Bergerova Thomas, founder and first chair of the Biological Exposure Indices Committee of the ACGIH. Many of the essays have been co-authored by Dr Fiserova-Bergerova Thomas and are evidence of her unique contribution in this field. The essays originally appeared in Applied Occupational and Environmental Hygiene.

Biological monitoring is a growth area in both occupational and environmental health. The ACGIH has moved forward to recommend biological exposure indices for several compounds linking these closely with threshold limit values (TLVs).

The collection of essays begins with an introductory essay by Dr Fiserova-Bergerova Thomas which was published in 1987. This deals with the development of biological exposure indices and their implementation. Anyone who needs a quick, and expert, introduction to the subject could not do better than to read this essay. Of particular value are the cautions issued with regard to the use of biological exposure indices (BEIs), and the need for "occupational health personnel . . . to consider pertinent circumstances and exercise professional judgment when using BEIs". A series of essays then follows dealing with absorption through the classic exposure routes and leading to a most helpful essay on pharmacokinetic models used in setting BEIs. Pharmacokinetic models sometimes strike fear in the heart of the non-specialist but this chapter is a most helpful introduction: the mathematics are kept to an acceptable standard and helpful diagrams and graphs are provided. The complexities of physiologically based multicompartmental models are discussed and examples provided for the application of models in setting BEIs. This essay is followed by a shorter account of the use of BEIs (or rather their derivation) for exposures to mixtures. This is an important chapter and bears particularly on exposure to chemicals in the environmental setting where mixtures are the rule. A useful series of examples of synergistic and antagonistic effects is provided. Antagonistic effects are often overlooked, the assumption, at least in the environmental field, often being that effects are likely to be additive if not synergistic.

This short series of essays should be read by all occupational health physicians and occupational hygienists and anyone interested in monitoring exposure to toxic materials. The BEIs have not yet been set for environmental standards: this may yet come.

RL MAYNARD

Age-dependent Doses to Members of the Public from Intakes of Radionuclides: Part two, Ingestion Dose Coefficients. (Annals of the ICRP). (Pp 167; price £60). 1994. ICRP Publication 67. ISBN 008041155X.

This short book comprises a report of a task group of the International Commission on Radiological Protection. Tables of ingestion dose coefficients for 13 elements are provided, details on 12 further elements have already been provided in the first report (1989).

To the non-expert the book is not easy reading although there is much information of interest for the general toxicologist as well as the specialist in radiation. The importance of being able to predict, with acceptable accuracy, the distribution of elements absorbed from the gut to various tissues is obvious and this book provides an important source of data.

RL MAYNARD