Hazard Control in the Work Place.
3 October 1995. The Royal College of Medicine, Wimpole Street, London.

The Royal College of Medicine is an appropriate venue for this prestigious conference, the birthplace of its kind to be held in the United Kingdom. It will provide essential information for everyone concerned with occupational health and safety and is a unique opportunity to obtain up to date knowledge and insights from internationally renowned experts in their field. The day will cover all aspects of hazard identification, standards and control, and the role of the Health and Safety Executive.

Conference topics include occupational exposure limits, the control of hazards, particularly chemical hazards, risk assessment and the role of the Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances (ACTS). The conference will also provide a forum for delegates to share experiences and discuss topical issues.

The conference will be chaired by Professor Malcolm Harrington, Director of the Institute of Occupational Health, Birmingham University. Speakers include Dr L S Levy, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Occupational Health, Birmingham University, Occupational Health Consultant Mr F Gill, Dr H Rafaat, of the Health and Safety Unit, Aston University, and Dr Linda Derrick, Regional Director for London, South East, and Home Counties Regions Field Operations, a division of the Health and Safety Executive.

This conference is being organised by Suffolk Educational and Training Services, part of Suffolk College, where a thriving Centre of Occupational Health Service has been based for some years.

A brochure with full details can be obtained from conference administrator Mr Wain at SETS Ltd, Suffolk College, Rope Walk, Ipswich IP4 1LT. Telephone (01473) 296633 Fax (01473) 216416.

For further information please contact Audrey Sempé, SETS Ltd, Suffolk College, Rope Walk, Ipswich IP4 1LT. Telephone (01473) 296518 Fax (01473) 216416.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: R L Maynard

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This book represents a departure from the previous IARC publications in that most of the data are presented in graphical rather than tabular form. Detailed tables are presented in a companion volume, but here one finds an encyclopedic compilation of material on cancer incidence from the six previous IARC volumes of Cancer Incidence in Five Continents along with national cancer mortality data taken from the WHO publications. Cancer incidence data cover the period 1950–1987 and mortality data are available from 1955 to 1988. Incidence data are provided from 60 registries in 29 countries and 36 national mortality data sets are used. Such a broad coverage makes the book daunting for the non-specialist, but the graphical layout makes it easy to find things, and is particularly useful for developing and preliminary testing of hypotheses about possible causes of cancer. Even in this context, however, it will need to be used in conjunction with the more detailed tabulations published in other IARC volumes. One weakness is the unavoidable delay in compiling international data, so that information on trends is already eight years out of date.

Another concern is the choice of rates to plot. The truncated rate and cumulative risk have very similarly shaped curves, the only difference being changes in the age structure of populations. It would have been useful to look at time trends more fully for younger and older age groups, especially for early onset cancers, such as Hodgkin’s disease and testicular cancer. The one acknowledgement of this is a final chapter on childhood cancers in which trends in cumulative risk for ages 0–14 years for leukaemia and all cancers are given.

The book is organised by chapters on each specific cancer site and they follow a standard pattern. Each chapter has some explanatory text that describes patterns separately for Europe, Asia and Oceania, and the Americas, but most of the space is filled with graphs. Trends in incidence for the truncated rates (30–74 years) and the cumulative risk from ages 30–74 years are given for each country for women and men separately for most sites. The best fitting age-period-cohort polynomial model is given for each country and graph. Separate graphs then give the percentage change per 5-year period for age bands 30–44, 45–64, 65–74 and the total age group 30–74. This process is then repeated for the mortality data.

This is very much a reference book for specialists. The availability of graphical data is useful and saves time when making lots of comparisons. Its value to the more casual reader is likely to be limited, however, and the sheer mass of material will put off the unininitiated.

JACK CUZICK


Environmental medicine is now a distinct medical discipline in North America and is becoming more prominent in the UK and Europe. Unfortunately, in the United Kingdom there is still much debate over the definition, scope and even “ownership” of the subject so that this American book may be a very useful contribution to the development of environmental medicine in this country as it shows the closeness of the subject to occupational medicine.

The book is ambitiously aimed at the needs of students, clinicians in training, and established clinicians who “seek a resource to integrate occupational and environmental medicine into routine clinical practice”. In this it does succeed, by presenting a seamless transition from the practice of clinical occupational medicine in the workplace to the application of the same and similar principles to the health effects of physical, chemical, and biological factors in the general environment.

The first section on principles and practice compares and contrasts the knowledge base and the fundamental skills central to good clinical practice. A chapter on communication of risk is especially welcome as this skill is so frequently lacking in commentaries on environmental issues. It was also particularly pleasing to see the role of specific susceptibility, as a factor in risk assessment, fully considered. The chapter that deals with legal and regulatory matters is understandably devoted to American legislation, bearing in mind the origins of the book, and so has little relevance to the British reader.

The next section describes the core disciplines of toxicology, epidemiology, and industrial hygiene. As introductions to these topics, the chapters constitute good succinct reminders that stimulate the interested reader to refer to other dedicated texts. The paucity of references in these chapters was a little disappointing and indeed, this is a criticism of the book in general. Few references are given in the bibliographies at the end of each chapter so that the stimulated reader may be somewhat frustrated.