BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: R L Maynard

If you wish to order, or require further information regarding the titles reviewed here, please contact or telephone the PM Bookshop, PO Box 295, London W1XH 9TE. Tel: 0171 383 6244. Fax: 0171 383 6662. Books are supplied post free in the UK and for British Forces Posted Overseas adsed, however, if postage rates exceed 15% for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a UK bank, or by credit card (MasterCard, Visa, or American Express) stating card number, expiry date, and your full name. (The price and availability are occasionally subject to revision by the Publishers.)


The only satisfactory way to review an encyclopaedia is to use it for a couple of years and then say whether it proved useful and reliable. Unfortunately, this is not a feasible approach for a book reviewer for a scientific journal especially when the book in question is as important as this one undoubtedly is. Instead I have dipped quickly into the book, looking up things I have often had to find in a hurry and have not been able to find, quickly, elsewhere. My conclusion is that this is an excellent handbook with only a few drawbacks.

CRC Handbooks are known to all scientists as a ready and reliable source of information. The series has expanded in recent years to encompass a huge range of topics: some are much more textbooks than handbooks of data. This Handbook is of the older style and is reminiscent of the Handbook of Physics and Chemistry. A team of 20 authors, all from the United States, have contributed 22 chapters which cover most aspects of toxicology. General toxicology, special toxicology (of organ systems and of topics such as irritancy), regulatory toxicology, and clinical toxicology are all covered. Though the style is determinedly American great efforts have been made, especially for regulatory toxicology, to provide for a world market. Requirements for studies in Japan, the European Union and the United States are all listed.

Data are presented mainly as tables and diagrams. These are both comprehensive and, as far as I can see, accurate. The detail provided is staggering. Page after page of lists of standard values (biochemical and physiological), common findings at post-mortem examination in a range of species, definitions of pathological changes, formu-

Occupational and Environmental Medicine 1996;53:432

Chest radiographs in the pneumoconioses, established it as just that a decretive process. Nevertheless, the author repeatedly refers to the epidemiological reader of chest radiographs as interpreting them. For example when stressing the importance of using the standard films for comparison he states: "Only in this fashion will the interpretation of the films become an objective exercise". Yet when discussing the behaviour of lay readers, commends them as being more likely to record than to interpret, which is in many ways to be preferred.

Those who have followed Morgan and Seaton in the correspondence columns on the subject of the attribution of chronic bronchitis and emphysema and decrement in lung function to exposure to coal dust, will discover from chapters 15 and 19 how far they have reconciled their differences.

MORRIS GREENBERG


The hardback edition has been my standard reference book for more than seven years, and for the 10 years before that I had made full use of the two volume first edition. My keenness to review the paperback edition turns to disappointment on discovering that the opportunity to revise some of the chapters had not been taken and it was still the second edition. The only change has been to update details of the contributors.

Several medical issues relating to commercial aviation need to be considered in more detail after the rapid expansion of air travel (currently almost 9000 passenger jet aircraft are in service and, over 12 months, they make about 13 million departures). For example, during the past few years concern has been expressed about the cabin environment, in particular the effects on crew and passengers of cosmic radiation and ozone; and the recent media comments about cabin air quality and the possibility of cross infection has led to renewed interest in the types of filters fitted to air conditioning units.

The introduction of the latest generation of passenger aircraft fitted with electronic flight instrument displays (AFIS) and flight management systems (FMS), the "glass cockpit", and almost invariably flown by two pilots, has resulted in new operating procedures and training. These, and many other changes in airline operations, require revisions to the sections on ergonomics and human factors.

Compared with the hardback edition, this version is still a good buy and for the time being worth having on one's bookshelf as the standard textbook on aviation medicine—especially for the Diploma course at Farnborough. But, hopefully, a third edition—perhaps also in paperback—will be published fairly soon.

ALAN H RASCOE