BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: R L Maynard

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In the United Kingdom, as in the United States, most medical practitioners in the field of occupational health are trained in other specialties. The Faculty of Occupational Medicine has long argued that, however best to bring these non-specialists into the academic fold, first trying short introductory courses and more recently replacing these with slightly longer study periods for a diploma, is a move which unforeseeably caused a sharp fall in demand in this group for its flagship associate examination. The introductory courses were a great success, revealing to hundreds and possibly thousands of general practitioners with part-time posts in industry the importance of regularly visiting the shop floor, the value of preventive medicine, and the pitfalls which can arise over ethical and confidentiality issues in the workplace. The courses and the textbooks they spawned focused on a modest number of facts and issues, probably in the hope that a few of these would stick and provide a firmer foundation than any attempt at comprehensiveness.

Not so in the United States, if this book is anything to go by. This second edition of a text which flowered from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine has the deceptive dimensions of a large pocket, but is more at home on the reference shelf from where, I prophesy, it will be frequently consulted. The number of important works on occupational health has gradually multiplied on both sides of the Atlantic in recent times to fill a specialist's library; I am personally glad to include this book in mine. Of special interest in this edition is an entirely new section on environmental medicine, with chapters on clinical endocrinology, hazardous waste, environmental incidents and emergencies, environmental audit, and risk assessment.

The rest of the 50 chapters cover all the main topics in occupational medicine, including less familiar ones on economics and computers in occupational medicine. The indexing is comprehensive and the references are useful and up to date; the inevitable North American perspective is, none the less, like all the text, easy and instructive to read. Thus I was interested to learn that there are fewer than 1000 practicing physicians who were board certified in occupational medicine, a figure not very different from the number with the association, membership, or fellowship of the Faculty. And the section on environmental medicine will inevitably invite comparisons with current practice in this area in the United Kingdom at a time when the Faculty is planning to incorporate environmental medicine in its name. The aims of the editor of this compendium have been amply fulfilled, including incorporating the whole range of occupational and environmental medicine between its covers in a form which will appeal especially to trainees and non-specialists.

PETER J BAXTER


This is a dictionary of terms for "personnel involved in the broad scope of activities that are carried out in the field of occupational health and safety". The authors are experienced practical industrial hygienists from the United States. Starting with terms like "AAIH" (American Academy of Industrial Hygiene) and "abrasive cleaning" and finishing with "zinctorporphyrin" and "zoonoses", this is a potentially useful dictionary of health and safety practice. It is aimed at practitioners rather than research workers, so some terms that are currently used in research exposure assessment are not included. Examples are "job exposure matrix", "retrospective exposure assessment", and "exposure group". However, it does cover a wide range of terms—such as relating to industrial work, occupational hygiene, United States regulatory practice, and occupational health. Any dictionary like this will contain errors and the authors have encouraged comments. It is a measure of the somewhat parochial geographical scope that the eager potential commentator is told that "our address can be found in a listing of the AIAH membership". If dictionaries like this are to be useful, the authors must encourage a dialogue with their readership and widen it to professions other than industrial hygiene and countries other than the United States.

This would be a useful addition to a standard reference textbook on occupational health. If it is regularly revised, it could become very useful indeed.

K M VENABLES

NOTICES

International Conference on Land Management. 6–8 January 1997. London. This conference is to be held at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Parliament Square, in London. The theme of the conference is Land Management with four subthemes: approaches to land management; land reform; environmental issues; geographic and land information systems. Further details from: Dr Richard K Bullard, School of Surveying, University of East London, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 2AS, UK. Tel: +44 (0181) 590 7722. Fax: +44 (0181) 849 3618. E-mail: Bullard@UEL.AC.UK

Plant Safety in the Chemical Industry. 9–11 June 1997. Frankfurt/Main, Germany. The International Section of the ISSA for the Prevention of Occupational Risks in the Chemical Industry will be hosting the 17th International Symposium at Achema 1997. The aim of this symposium is to show how the safety of both employees and the environment can be optimised in the chemical industry by implementing innovative process solutions and by ensuring the proper planning, development, and operation of chemical plants.

An international exchange of experiences will provide a forum for showing how safety management systems can be optimally adapted to the potential risks posed by processes and plant. It will also serve as a vehicle for participants to present concrete technical and organisational solutions which will help ensure safe and reliable plant operation in compliance with the legal requirements.

The general topic of "Plant Safety in the Chemical Industry" has been specially chosen because of its broad appeal to both plant and occupational safety experts and to specialists from the fields of planning, operation, and management. All lectures and discussions will be interpreted simultaneously into English, French, and German.


Symposium will include environmental exposure, occupational exposure, exposure to amalgams, toxic mechanisms, and biomarkers. Abstract deadline: 3 February, 1997.

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