

opens with a chapter on pulmonary immunity and finishes with a detailed description of present day techniques of molecular biology and their potential importance in lung immunology; in between are 24 chapters of more or less equal length covering topics from the prevalence and mechanisms of asthma to rare lung diseases. An unexpected omission is an introductory chapter on the anatomy and cellular constituents of the respiratory tract which would have been helpful for the reader more familiar with immunology than lung pathology.

The editors are to be congratulated in persuading so many of their colleagues to contribute. However, there seem to have been few attempts to avoid repetitions within the individual chapters so that, for example, in a chapter on sarcoidosis yet another description of the functional activities of macrophages deflects the reader's attention from the important finding that in this condition cells obtained by bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL), unlike in other interstitial lung diseases, parallel those present within the alveolar spaces both functionally and phenotypically.

An excellent chapter is the review on acute pulmonary inflammation by Doerschuk and her co-workers which most lucidly describes the processes involved in neutrophil migration and transit, the expression of adhesion molecules in response to differing stimuli, and the mechanisms leading to sequestration of cells in the pulmonary vasculature. Another outstanding chapter is that by Holgate and Synek which, as well as a historical overview of asthma, discusses how asthma extends beyond disordered smooth muscle function and occurs in association with other atopic diseases. It includes interesting information on recruitment and upregulation of endothelial adhesion molecules in allergic inflammatory responses and on the capacity of human mucosal mast cells to generate pleiotropic cytokines.

The quality of other chapters varies. With respect to occupational diseases I was somewhat surprised although naturally delighted to find, in the review of asbestos related lung

diseases by Kagan and Brody as well as on the front cover, reproductions of photographs of rat alveolar macrophages used in my PhD thesis. However, those studies were performed a quarter of a century ago, suggesting the need for a new approach in this area of research. In relation to the human data presented in the review, and keeping in mind present postulates relating to fibre persistence, it is unfortunate that the authors were unable to provide information of type of asbestos or exposure years. The authors discussing mesothelioma (chapter 23) advocate new immunotherapy and gene therapy although there is no evidence that immunotherapy has been successful in the treatment of other lung tumours and furthermore, patients with mesothelioma do not generally present at an early stage. A more comprehensive and well documented view was presented in the chapter on silicosis.

The editor's stated aims have been to present fundamental issues of pulmonary immune responses and immune diseases based on new insights into host immune responsiveness. Perhaps different organisation of the chapters would have facilitated these aims. At present the organisation of the book does not allow possible links, or comparisons, on the role of alveolar macrophages as propounded by Holt's group in chapter 4 with that described by Kagan and Brody in chapter 21. Chapter 19 on HIV which clearly identifies and discusses the threat of tuberculosis is separated by four chapters from a thorough review on the immunopathology of tuberculosis, including one chapter concerned mainly with animal models of parasitic infestations; idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (chapter 8) is sandwiched between chapters on asthma and hypersensitivity pneumonitis and so on. A more judicious collating of the various chapters would have ensured the reader's attention throughout.

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**Hazardous Chemicals: Desk Reference, 4th ed.** Edited by R J LEWIS. (pp 1644; £89.00). 1997. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. ISBN: 442 023227.

This is probably the best single volume reference work on the toxicology of chemicals currently available. The data presented have been extracted from the well known *Dangerous Properties of Industrial Chemicals* (9th ed). Data on more than 5000 compounds and preparations are presented: each entry being in a consistent and helpful format. For the occupational physician the provision of OSHA, ACGIH, and DFG (MAK) values where available will be invaluable. Also, CAS numbers and details of current carcinogenicity evaluations are provided. An exhaustive list of synonyms (over 100 for malathion) is given for each compound as is a short description of its physical characteristics. Some of the descriptions of physical characteristics are perhaps eccentric: few will meet ozone as a blue or violet-black solid or even as a dark-blue liquid! For the physician the safety profile will probably be the most used part of any entry. This profile is telegraphic in style but packs in a lot of useful information. No information on case management is provided. A valuable feature of this book is that entries are provided for groups of compounds—for example, carbonates, chlorates, esters. Of course the value of a brief safety profile of a group of compounds as diverse as esters can be questioned but I have found these general entries informative.

The index is heavily cross referenced and occupies 367 pages each of two closely printed columns.

As to single volume competitors: the *Merck Index* is the most obvious. Merck offers wider coverage but less information of immediate use to the occupational physician.

As a book to turn to when asked the symptoms likely to be produced by a compound of which you have never heard this is excellent. Good value at £89.00

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