

# PostScript

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Occupational and Environmental Health—Recognising and Preventing Disease and Injury, 5th edn

Edited by B S Levy, D H Wegman, S L Baron, R K Sokas. PA: Philadelphia, 2006, \$69.95, pp 773. ISBN 0-7817-5551-4

This text carries on in the good tradition of the previous editions, directed at practitioners and students in the health and safety professions. The book's editors and many of the authors are of international repute, although its focus is mainly US directed. There is a welcome inclusion of some authors and examples from other countries. The chapter by McMichael and others on "Global environmental changes" is a particularly good example of this. Nevertheless, readers outside the USA may have to use it as a "companion text" in parallel with other material to gain a legal, social and cultural perspective that is more balanced for their needs.

The book integrates environmental and occupational aspects better than previous editions and compares well with competing texts in this regard. As stated in the title, its thrust is in dealing with the recognition and prevention of disease and injury, and thus issues related to fitness for work and rehabilitation are only touched on in a patchy way.

It achieves a good blend of practical application, together with the elements of the supporting sciences such as toxicology and epidemiology, as well as the social context. The book covers a wide range of topics, with a strong emphasis on chemical and physical exposure, as exemplified by various chapters such as those dealing with noise, radiation and chemical hazards. Perhaps the readers should be more consistently offered the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry names of chemicals, and the "examples of biomarkers" need to be considered more critically to differentiate between those that tend to be better as indices of exposure and those that are subtle biological effects or overt health outcomes. However, these are minor criticisms, and generally the book has been updated to reflect changing times—for example, by

including an account of ultrafine and nanoparticles. "Multiple chemical sensitivities" is accorded the status of a syndrome as well as five pages of text in the chapter on "Indoor air quality". However, I would have preferred a better-integrated and free-standing account of this condition and others such as chronic fatigue. The book includes a chapter on "Occupational stress", although perhaps the simple paradigm it adopts needs to be widened—for example, to take account of illness behaviour as well as the role of rehabilitation for stress and mental illness in more detail. The chapter dealing with musculoskeletal disorders provides a well-integrated account of physical and psychosocial factors, clinical aspects as well as prevention.

Its references and bibliography provide an added bonus especially as they are often supported by short explanations to assist with further reading.

The book is well supported by useful case studies and illustrations. The absence of colour plates presumably has the laudable intent of limiting cost and hence improving access to this valuable educational tool. However, some of the images are dated and poorly reproduced.

In conclusion, it is a useful text to inform and support day-to-day practice, to educate students and help with their examinations. If I had not received a free reviewer's copy, I would have bought the book out of my own pocket.

Raymond Agius

### Tumours of the Serosal Membranes. Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Atlas of Tumour Pathology, Fourth Series, Fascicle 3

Edited by A Churg, P T Cagle, V L Roggli. DC: Washington, 2006, \$75.00, pp 147. ISBN 1-881041-97-2

*Tumours of the serosal membranes* is fascicle 3 of the fourth series of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Atlas of tumour pathology. It covers lesions of the pleura, peritoneum, pericardium and tunica vaginalis. It follows the style of the other fascicles in the series, with a roughly even balance of text and coloured illustrations. There are useful

chapters on the anatomy of the serosal membranes, cytological aspects of diagnosis and the histopathological differential diagnosis of malignant mesothelioma from other tumours, and benign versus malignant mesothelial reactions. Nowadays, it is probably the latter that causes most problems to cytopathologists and histopathologists.

I do not completely agree with the authors in dismissing the role of immunohistochemistry in the differentiation of reactive from malignant epithelioid-type mesothelial proliferations, as I have found the use of p53, epithelial membrane antigen and desmin to be useful. However, this is "nit picking". The book is comprehensive and illustrates and discusses a wide variety of rare and unusual lesions that involve the serosal membranes. The index is reasonable.

The aim of this book is to provide thorough, concise and up-to-date information to help the practising pathologist in arriving at the correct diagnosis in a difficult case. As such it admirably succeeds. The three authors, who are members of the US-Canadian Mesothelioma Panel, have considerable experience in the diagnosis of these lesions and, as would be expected, provide a wealth of high-quality illustrative material. The book should function as a good handbook for the trainee and practising histopathologist. Clinicians involved in the diagnosis, management or medicolegal aspects of mesothelioma would also find it useful. The price of \$75.00 seems to be good value.

Allen R Gibbs

## CORRECTION

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J Weuve, K T Kelsey, J Schwartz, *et al.* Delta-aminolevulinic acid dehydratase polymorphism and the relation between low level lead exposure and the Mini-Mental Status Examination in older men: the Normative Aging Study. (*Occup Environ Med* 2006;63:746–53). Reference 4 is incorrect and should read Blecker ML, Lindgren KN, Ford DP. Differential contribution of current and cumulative indices of lead dose to neuropsychological performance by age. *Neurology* 1997;48:639–45.