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Book notices

Oxygen Therapy. P Howard. (Pp 96; £9·95.) Bristol: Wright,

This book is intended for everyone who uses oxygen therapy,
from ambulance men and first aid workers to nursing and
medical staff. It describes the physiological basis of hypoxia
and the principles of oxygen therapy, with particular
emphasis on delivery systems and masks. The section inten-
ded specifically for the medically qualified is extremely brief,
dealing with the interaction of drugs with oxygen, pulmonary
hypertension, mechanisms of oedema, bronchodilator drugs,
and ventilatory failure in less than three pages. Of course, it is
a short book that is not intended to be comprehensive and
therefore provides the lay reader with a list of references of
review articles and original papers, together with a glossary
of terms and symbols. The important sections that discuss
controlled and long term oxygen therapy are clear and
concise and there are useful sections describing the tech-
niques available for measuring the response to oxygen
therapy and the use of oxygen in special circumstances, such
as in special care baby units, ambulances, and aircraft. This is
a helpful book that is easy to read and brings together all the
information that prescribers of oxygen would require. It will
find a niche in many intensive care units, anaesthetic
departments, chest wards, and ambulance stations.—JEH

Early Detection of Occupational Diseases. World Health
92-4-154211-X.

This book covers the full range of occupational diseases, but
is weighted towards respiratory disease. It is aimed at health
professionals to help them in the early detection of
occupational diseases and then lists the major diseases, with
sections on the occurrence, occupations at risk, mechanisms
of action, assessment of exposure, clinical effects, exposure-
effect relationships, and details of suitable pre-employment
screen tests and periodic examinations. The next section deals
with clinical laboratory tests for the early detection of
occupational diseases with a section on the respiratory
system, and finally there are chapters on biological monitor-
ing and assessment of environmental exposure. Despite the
original aims, it is unclear who would benefit from reading
this book. It is written in medical language and so is less
suitable for an occupational administrative audience, for
which the level of information ought to be most suitable. The
medical content has a strong epidemiological bias and lacks
the detail necessary for a clinician dealing with a patient
exposed to any occupational risks. Although the aim of the
book is to teach how to detect preclinical disease, in the
respiratory section at least this has not been achieved. The
section on immunological occupational respiratory disease
is poor; this is an area where sensitisation may be detected
before disease, but there is no discussion at all of this topic.
There are some extremely surprising statements, such as
"There is no relationship between the concentration of a
sensitising agent and adverse effects." This statement is
hardly likely to encourage a reduction of exposure to
occupational sensitising agents. I fear that this book has tried
to tackle too big a subject too superficially and has tried to
satisfy the WHO's directive about detecting preclinical
disease in many situations where the relationship between
current changes—for instance, in lung function or immuno-
logoy—and subsequent disease has not been established.—
PSB