Correspondence

Asthma due to contaminated humidifiers

Sir,—I read with interest the article by Dr PS Burge and others (April 1985;40:248–54) about occupational asthma in a factory with a contaminated humidifier. Höchli in 1969¹ described asthmatic attacks provoked by office humidifiers in a 58 year old asthmatic patient, and by domestic humidifiers in a 68 year old merchant and a 10 year old girl, but occupational asthma caused only by humidifiers has not been described previously.

Contaminated humidifiers mostly cause humidifier fever without changes in chest radiograph. Cases of extrinsic allergic alveolitis with pulmonary infiltrates have, however, been reported not only from the United States but also from Switzerland^{2,3} and Finland.⁴ In these cases the disease was caused by *Thermoactinomyces vulgaris*, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, amoebae, and possibly mites.

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- 1 Höchli M. Luftbefeuchter und Bronchialasthma. *Praxis* 1969;58:954–6.
- 2 Keller H, Spengler H, Latscha U. Befeuchterfieber. *Schweiz Med Wochenschr* 1972;102:865–72.
- 3 Gerber P, de Haller R, Pyrozynski WJ, Sturzenegger ER, Brändli O. Die Befeuchterlunge. *Schweiz Med Wochenschr* 1981;111:182–6.
- 4 van Assendelft A, Forsén K-O, Keskinen H, Alanko K. Humidifier-associated extrinsic allergic alveolitis. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 1979;5:35–41.

Notices

British Lung Foundation grants

The newly established British Lung Foundation is now in a position to invite applications for equipment grants for up to £5000 from its research fund. Application forms may be obtained from British Lung Foundation, 12a Onslow Gardens, London SW7 3AP, and must be returned by 31 July 1985.

International Union Against Cancer

The International Union Against Cancer administers three forms of fellowship designed to permit investigators engaged in experimental or clinical cancer research to work for periods varying from a few weeks to a year in suitable centres in countries other than their own. Fifteen fellowships are available that may be held for up to one year, 50 for up to three months, and 90 for up to 28 days. Further information and application forms may be obtained from the International Union Against Cancer, 3 rue du Conseil-General, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland.

Pharmacology of asthma

A course entitled "Pharmacology of Asthma" is being held at the Cardiothoracic Institute, Brompton Hospital, London SW3 6HP, from 18 to 22 November 1985. Further details may be obtained from the Postgraduate Course Secretary at the above address or from the course organiser, Professor Peter Barnes.

Indian Chest Society: Fifth National Congress on Respiratory Diseases

The Fifth National Congress on Respiratory Diseases will be held on 12–15 December 1985 at SMS Medical College, Jaipur, India. Those interested in attending the congress should contact Dr US Mathur, Secretary General, FNCRD, 18 Shivaji Marg, Diggi House, Jaipur, 302 004, India.