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Book notices

Oxygen Therapy. P Howard. (Pp 96; £9.95.) Bristol: Wright, 1987. ISBN 0-7236-0900-0.

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 intended 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 techniques 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 Organisation. (Pp 274; \$26.40.) Geneva: WHO, 1986. ISBN 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 monitoring 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 early changes—for instance, in lung function or immunology—and subsequent disease has not been established.—PSB