

Chlorophenols, health and the environment

Environmental Health Criteria 93: Chlorophenols Other Than Pentachlorophenol. Pp. 208. Illustrated. SFr. 22. Geneva: WHO. 1989.

A book specifically considering the research on both the environmental and health aspects of chlorophenols must be welcomed. This volume reports and succinctly presents the results of many studies, and covers all fields from production and use, through environmental pollution to occupational and non-occupational exposure. Much use was made of tables to present data. However, a lack of explanatory figures (only one in the book) such as elimination curves, forced the panel to give long and difficult-to-interpret descriptions of data in text.

A positive aspect of the approach taken in this series is that uncertainties and gaps in our knowledge on the compound or class of compound can be highlighted and integrated. This the panel managed to achieve. Reference was also made concerning possible confounding influences of contaminants of chlorophenols such as polychlorinated dibenzodioxins and dibenzofurans on health. The important contribution of pentachlorophenol (specifically dealt with in No. 71 of this series) was also considered and compared. The book has a clear and well-reasoned section on the determination of tolerable daily intake for some of the congeners, which will be of use to policy-makers. The last and very useful section recommends areas of research on all the aspects covered.

This volume is well documented (373 references), the most recent dated 1988. At least one reference in the text was not included in the list. No obvious editing or language mistakes were encountered and the style was uniform and objective throughout.

This book, in the already extensive series published by the WHO, presents a clear overview of the subject. It will be of considerable use to industrial hygienists, researchers in environmental health and pollution as well as management and labour organisations.

H. Bouwman

Haematological aspects of systemic disease

Haematological Aspects of Systemic Disease. Ed. by I. W. Delamore and J. A. Liu Yin. Pp. 568. Illustrated. London. Baillière Tindall. 1990.

Haematological changes, whether clinical or laboratory, are probably the most commonly encountered abnormalities confronting medical practitioners irrespective of their persuasion, whether this be in general practice, paediatrics, surgery, internal medicine, geriatrics, obstetrics or gynaecology. In a number of these patients the cause will reside primarily within the haematopoietic system. However, in the majority, they reflect underlying disease. It follows that a common diagnostic problem is the recognition and then correct assignment of an abnormality in the blood count either to the systemic disorder known to be present or, as the first step, in establishing the presence of pathology that may reside in another system.

The major haematological texts cover both primary and secondary haematological abnormalities. These books are large and perhaps of slightly less value to the general practitioner or a variety of specialists who primarily need to understand pathogenesis of signs, symptoms and diagnosis as they occur in a particular clinical setting. It is to this latter issue that Dr Delamore and Dr Liu Yin have given attention but have assigned the details of management to a slightly lower priority.

The book is well organised and follows the time-honoured approach of describing the changes in the blood film and the bone marrow. Thereafter abnormalities in red cells, leucocytes, platelets and haemostasis are described. In each of these sections the major systemic illnesses that most commonly give rise to abnormalities could be identified with little effort. In each case, furthermore, the editors have maintained a surprising degree of uniformity so that overlap is reduced to a minimum.

In what might almost be regarded as a second section of the book, occupying an approximately equal number of chapters and pages, the approach has been reversed: in a sense the haematological abnormalities are cross-referenced. Here some of the more commonly encountered clinical disorders are described and their influence on haematopoiesis, including the lymphoreticular system, described. Each of the authors is well recognised for their long contribution to teaching as well as research in the topics on which they write. The index is well laid out and information on any particular abnormality can easily be located.

How well have the authors succeeded in meeting their described objective?

Bearing in mind the focus on pathogenesis and diagnosis, rather than management, it would seem that they have been successful. Furthermore in any area likely to be unfamiliar to the reader current references are provided at the end of the respective chapters. Sufficient clear tables are included, each of which is brief and well organised. Figures have, by and large, been little employed, without any particular disadvantage.

For the non-specialist haematologist wanting ready access to a book that provides information on symptoms and signs, this approach linking haematological abnormalities with constitutional illness, will be found a useful starting place: in many instances reference to this volume will be all that is necessary in correctly identifying the underlying disease. Once such an association has been established it will be a short step to refer the case to a specialist haematologist or local additional material that deal specifically with management.

Haematological Aspects of Systemic Disease can be recommended with confidence for a wide range of readers, whether they be general physicians or specialists in fields of endocrinology, gastroenterology, immunology, microbiology, renal function — to mention but a few.

Peter Jacobs

Aspects of antibiotics

Milestones of Medical Progress: Antibiotics — Medical and Economic Aspects. Ed. by Gabriella Pedroni and Peter Zweifel. Pp. 1 + 56. Illustrated. SFr. 4,50. Basle: Pharma Information. 1990.

As a pleasant post-prandial Sunday afternoon read, *Milestones of Medical Progress — Antibiotics* is an interesting little book on the history of antibiotics and their discovery.

The section on cost-benefit analysis is far too short to be of major importance but it could be of some value to students in their introductory lectures on the vast amounts of money spent on antibiotic prescribing.

Antibiotic resistance is discussed very superficially, while marketing and the pharmaceutical industry are given very brief mention.

A book of little practical value.

J. Talmud