Asthma in the Workplace

This book represents the third major revision of the original that was published in 1993. The three above editors who dedicate this edition to a deceased fellow co-editor Dr I. Leonard Bernstein combine skilfully the efforts of 69 expert contributors of whom all but 24 have appointments in North America. This is a major reference book of particular value to those working in either research or clinics involving complex respiratory occupational diseases. Within the five parts of the book, which represent general consensus opinions, there is understandably a very heavy North American bias particularly in the legal and workers compensation guidance. The analysis and tabular presentation of international compensation schemes provide excellent material for easy comparisons. There is a logical flow to the text and in addition to the introduction there are parts of the book dealing with assessment, management, specific agents causing immunological occupational asthma and specific disease entities and variants.

The chapters are very readable and a few have helpful highlighted case histories and workplace scenarios. The majority of the chapters represent current medical practice with good scientific data.

The book is comprehensive although I would have preferred to have witnessed an expansion of Chapters 25 and 27 to deal more with the emerging recognition of the importance of toxic organic dust particularly in the composting industry.

Chapter 17 has consolidated tables with information on laboratory and farm animals, arthropods and seafood.

A serious omission in this section is the total absence of information relating to domestic pets and the problems their professional carers experience. New chapters have been added in this edition for occupational hygienists. As well as focussing as a core issue on occupational allergic asthma, there are useful new chapters on irritant-induced asthma, reactive airways dysfunction syndrome and asthma exacerbated by work.

Disappointingly, despite the expense of the manual there are very few photographs included and these are generally of poor quality.

I have no reservations about the value of the book for the research and specialist respiratory consultants. However, this is not a text for routine study although a useful albeit expensive reference resource as an authoritative detailed text for the inexperienced or challenged occupational physician to interrogate in a library setting.

Rating
★★✩✩ (Reference only)

Alan Bray

development of Vaccines: From Discovery to Clinical Testing