reduced younger working populations able to support them. There has already been a year on year increase in the number of workers carrying on in employment beyond pension age and with the financial climate as it is, this is likely to continue. It is opportunistic then to be asked to review a book on work and the older person.

This text is written by two occupational therapists, one from an academic institution in the USA and the other from the York St John University in the UK so it has a definite Anglo-American feel even though one of the chapter authors works in Czechoslovakia. The target audience is occupational therapists, elderly care workers, social workers and psychologists but is said to be of value to anyone working with older adults or who is an older adult! Its 13 chapters cover topics as diverse as the theories of ageing, well-being and employment and the cognitive benefits of work as well as on the impact of technology on work and social justice and the older worker.

The book is easy to read and contains interesting comments about what constitutes an older person and the trends over the centuries. It dispels the myth that centuries ago people died young and points out that the huge infant death rate skewed the results reported for average life expectancy; if you survived infancy you had a good chance of reaching 40–50. The use of case studies makes this book of interest, not just to health care professionals but also to anyone with an interest in history and the various health and social systems across the world.

I don’t think I learnt much of value for use in professional daily occupational health work except in the technology chapter which has some useful contact details, e.g. for Remap (www.remap.org.uk). This is a network of volunteers throughout the country who help with the supply of adapted equipment, even building bespoke items when they are not commercially available. But I had a really enjoyable read of a very well written book. I hope the next edition contains more real life examples and case studies of how real companies and organizations have facilitated older workers staying on in the right type of work.

The book would be useful for someone looking for a subject for a piece of research, for newcomers to the area of older workers and for those seeking a wider perspective on future workforces.

Rating

★☆☆☆ (Reference for general occupational practitioners)
★☆★☆ (Buy and keep for anyone planning to specialize or research this area)

Nerys Williams

This book, published by the Royal Society of Chemistry, is part of a series studying the human and ecological risks of exposure to chemicals and other toxicants. The author is an honorary senior lecturer at Imperial College London. The book aims to ‘re-evaluate epidemiological and occupational health studies, experimental studies in animals and in vitro experiments relating to the toxicity of 27 metal and metalloid elements for which evidence of carcinogenicity has been presented’.

The book introduces the audience to the complex mechanisms of human exposure to metals and metalloids through work, home life or medical therapies. It makes reference to both established mechanisms of toxicity, such as Itai-Itai disease from cadmium poisoning, and emerging hazards, for example those posed by air borne nanoparticles. It describes the mechanisms of carcinogenicity caused by these elements, with and without changes in DNA sequence (the latter being studied by the relatively new discipline of epigenetics).

The author acknowledges the challenges associated with researching these effects, which include long lag phases of 20 years or more between exposure and disease, the effect of lifestyle factors such as smoking and the exposure to a combination of potential carcinogens. The World Health Organization has reported, for example, that ‘… every tenth lung cancer is closely related to risks in the workplace’. These risks include the effects of environmental contaminants such as microcrystalline silica.

The author categorizes the elements in two explicit groups that are described in separate sections of the book. The first group comprises of elements of importance as nutrients such as iron, calcium and copper, whereas the
second comprises of those who have no nutritional value, such as lead, cadmium and arsenic. Each chapter examines one or more elements, detailing their role as macro- or trace nutrients, their industrial uses, ways of human exposure and the most recent research in terms of their toxicity and carcinogenicity. It concludes with a comprehensive and up-to-date reference list.

The book is of interest to scientists in toxicology and related disciplines working in both industry and academia. It is an excellent reference source for occupational and environmental health professionals whose role involves advising on matters related to metals.

**Rating**

★★☆☆☆ (Reference only)

Anna Trakoli

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