The problem with this format is the danger of repetition, particularly between the first two parts of each volume, although the authors have been selective in the reproduction of individual country material. The balance is best achieved in the volume on transplantation in which the discussion section brings in material from countries beyond the study area, and the individual country statements complement the review on specific issues.

The transplant volume also benefited from the availability of more comprehensive statistics. The diffuse nature of the four prenatal screening technologies posed problems for analysis, and the lack of a clearly defined hospital service responsible for their use made statistical information hard to obtain. Technologies which involve a greater element of medical skill and time input are also more difficult to cost. Technologies to treat renal stones, particularly lithotripsy, are more equipment orientated and thus easier to quantify.

It is disappointing to find that the poor quality of health service data is still preventing more rigorous analysis of the adoption and utilisation of medical technology. The overview section is based on the elaborate model of innovation developed in the medical context by the Office of Technology Assessment, but there is no attempt to analyse diffusion curves. Qualitative analysis is presented, based on the expert opinion of those taking part in the study. Many factors appear to have had an influence on particular technologies in individual countries but no consistent pattern emerges. The general conclusion is that the diffusion of medical technology is dominated by clinical decision making and governments will only be able to control the process when they demand evaluation of technologies. Thus readers may have their suspicions confirmed, and be provided with much interesting information about the use of medical technologies in Europe by these books. New thinking on modelling the diffusion process and the development of policy is harder to find.

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New Directions in Health Psychology Assessment. Ed Harold E Schroeder. (Pp 177; £28.00.) Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, Bristol, PA, USA, 1991. ISBN 0-8911-6925-3

This book is concerned with exploring fundamental questions of what constitutes a determinant of health in a world where improvements in a developed nation's health are increasingly less likely to be linked to medical interventions. The byproduct of a conference held at Kent State University in 1987, the contributors aim to point out the limitations of current methods of assessment and suggest new areas which might profitably be explored.

Three chapters are particularly concerned with the development and operationalisation of complex models. Kaplan renders the cost/utility basis underlying his General Health

Policy Model of quality of life assessment almost acceptable by sidestepping the morally difficult areas of treatment selection and comparing the relative merits of two health promotion techniques in preventing premature death and improving quality of life. Olson and Stewart construct a model which maps family systems theory onto the stress, coping, and adaptation literature. This model allows for the complex interactions between different systems, the family with those at work, at an individual or couple level, to be taken into account. This interaction between domains is also considered in Karoly's excellent contribution. He develops a new, process focused, approach to exploring inconsistencies in individuals' health related behaviours on the basis of the variety of goals they pursue.

The two chapters which look specifically at the relationship between properties of the physical environment and health disappointingly fail to address assessment issues in the same detail as the other contributors. While Evans and colleagues concentrate on describing the effects of the environment on the health and cognitive development of children, Kasl, in his chapter on work, chooses to focus on the problems of research design.

In the final chapter on community needs assessment Rhodes and Jason return to the issue of values where they highlight the importance of preserving a balance between the expertise of professionals and the community's perceptions of its own needs, however difficult these are to determine.

Given that the purpose of this book was to broaden the debate as to what constitutes a health related behaviour rather than comprehensively cover a specific field, it is, inevitably, patchy both in subject matter and in the approaches taken by the various contributors. As it stands it provides a vindication of the view that what we need is not necessarily the generation of endless amounts of new data but frameworks within which existing data can be interpreted and the systemic relationships between one domain and another elucidated.

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A Review of Biostatistics: A Program for Self-Instruction (4th ed). by Paul E Leaverton. (Pp 145; £12.50.) Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1991. ISBN 0-632-02911-0

This slim ring bound book seeks to introduce the reader to the fundamental concepts of biostatistics in approximately 100 pages. The book is written in the style of a Do It Yourself guide rather than a reference manual and is preceded by a short introduction laying out the educational objectives of each chapter.

Each page of the following eight chapters is divided; the main text is on the left, and consists of a series of short points which are frequently interspersed with simple questions. Answers to these questions are found on the right half of the page. This style does encourage the reader to think about

whether the material presented has been understood. Many of the questions are very basic, often involving selecting a single word or performing a simple calculation. However, a reader who does not get the correct answer is not always provided with an explanation.

The first three chapters of the book cover basic concepts including descriptive statistics, probability (with a brief mention of sensitivity and specificity), and a helpful section on populations, samples, and the Normal distribution. Statistical inference is then addressed with chapter four, introducing confidence intervals and their interpretation, and chapter five, having a definite emphasis on hypothesis testing and statistical significance. Chapter six reviews linear regression and correlation, and chapters seven and eight give a brief introduction to clinical trials and some epidemiological concepts. This is followed by a list of 15 selected references which enlarge on the material discussed. The book finishes with a comprehensive index. Details of method calculations are kept to a minimum or completely omitted, and examples from the medical literature are very limited and are not referenced. No mention is given to non-parametric tests.

In summary, this is a useful book for those in the medical and public health fields requiring a "crash course" in basic concepts and interpretation of medical statistics, but would not be sufficient for those wishing to apply the methods introduced. One of the nice features of the book is that it can easily be worked through in a day, but obviously this concise style places limitations on the depth of material covered.

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Distribution of Cataracts in the Population and Influencing Factors. (*Developments in Ophthalmology*, vol 21.) Eds K. Sasaki, O Hockwin. (Pp 182; price not stated.) Karger Publishers, Basle, 1991. ISBN 3-8055-5335-8

This book contains 27 selected papers presented at the Third International Symposium on Cataract Epidemiology in Singapore in March, 1990. The opening paper is a review of epidemiological methodology which highlights the difficulties of studying cataract. The uninitiated may be surprised to learn that cataract comprises a set of pathologies which differ in their site, morphology, and biochemical properties and may be related to different risk factors. Three papers specifically discuss cataract classification systems for epidemiological studies. Seven papers describe experimental cataract research using rats and a variety of agents which are thought to either promote or retard cataract formation. Cataract surgeons may be relieved to hear that no potent agent to prevent cataract formation is predicted but animal and human studies suggest that the consumption of antioxidants such as vitamins C and E, and pyruvate, may inhibit cataract formation.

The 10 papers which report epidemiological studies are, with the exception of two from Bulgaria, based on non-European

populations. Surveys are reported from Japan, China, Indonesia, Korea, and Kuwait. This is perhaps not surprising in view of the symposium location. For those interested in studying the causes of cataract, this geographical perspective is valuable. For those involved in planning health services in the United States and Europe it has little of value. In the United Kingdom, where epidemiological "needs" assessment is becoming standard practice, the major textbooks on ophthalmology contain more relevant and comprehensive data on cataract prevalence rates, which are strongly age related, and other associated risk factors, eg, diabetes, infections. Previous symposia proceedings (volumes 15 and 17 in *Developments in Ophthalmology*) probably contain reports of large American and European ophthalmic surveys which have been undertaken over the last 30 years. This new volume complements those reports. International collaboration to study the epidemiology of cataracts is an important recent development.

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Short Reviews

The Epidemiology and Biology of Multiple Myeloma. Eds G I Orams, M Potter. (Pp 192; DM 60.00.) Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, 1991. ISBN 3-540 54061-X.

In 1990 the National Cancer Institute in the USA sponsored a workshop on the epidemiology of multiple myeloma. This book comprises articles prepared by participants in this workshop. Discussed in the papers are: descriptive and analytic epidemiology, differences in risk factors between blacks and whites, monoclonal gammopathies and their progression, and hypotheses regarding the aetiology and pathogenesis of multiple myeloma.

***Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in Human Diseases.** Eds J Y Homma, H Tanimoto, I A Holder, N Hoiby, G Doring. (Pp 250; Price not stated.) Karger, Basel, 1991. ISBN 3-8055-5385-4.

Since the 1960s various toxic metabolites of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections have been found and characterised, their roles in pathogenicity have been clarified, and effective immunotherapy has been developed. However, eradication from areas of local inflammation has not yet been achieved. This book, based on an international symposium, is an update of

basic research and clinical aspects of the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infection. It may be of interest to public health physicians who like to keep up to date with current developments in the treatment and control of infectious diseases.

IDRC Annual Report 1990-1991. (Pp 34; price not stated) plus Supplement (pp 68). IDRC, Ottawa, 1991.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a public corporation created by the parliament of Canada to stimulate and support scientific and technical research by developing countries. The fields of investigation to which IDRC gives its financial and professional support are widespread but include tropical diseases, nutrition, the environment and health services. The Annual Report provides an overview of their activities and the supplement to the Report provides a brief description of each of the projects which are currently being supported.

NOTICES

Health Professions in 1992: The European Challenge. Conference in the Guildhall, London EC2, under the auspices of the Royal Society of Health. Date 28 April; fee £75; contact address: Conference Department, The Royal Society of Health, 38A St George's Drive, London SW1V 4BH; tel 071-630 0121, fax 071-976 6847.

The 22nd National Congress and 1st European Meeting of Industrial Medical Officers will take place in Nantes, France, on June 2-5 1992. Special themes will be: Occupational medicine and the environment; Health, aging and work; and Occupational dermatosis of chemical origin. Further information from Dr Gendreau, Médecine du Travail, 2 rue Linné—BP 789, 44029 Nantes Cedex 04, France.

An International Congress for Infectious Diseases will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 7-11, 1992. Abstracts are required by February 1st 1992. Further details from the conference secretariat: WKV, c/o Interconvention, A-1450 Vienna, Austria (fax 43-1 2369 648).

Second Summer Course in Biostatistics. An intensive three week application orientated biostatistics course will take place at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India, from 15 June to 3 July 1992. Further details from Professor P S S Sundar Rao, Department of Biostatistics, Christian Medical College, Vellore 632002; tel 22603; fax 416 25035. Final date for registration 30 April.

The 1st Pan-European Conference on Medical Services will take place in Budapest, Hungary, from 30 August to 3 September, 1992. Further information from Conference Secretariat, Interconvention, Austria Centre Vienna, Am Hubertusdamm 6, A-1450 Vienna, Austria; tel 42-1-2369-2643; fax 43-1-2369-648.

Berzelius Symposium 1922: Water and Public Health (joint conference of the Swedish Society of Medicine and the Royal Society of Medicine). Date: 7-9 September 1992; place: Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole St, London W1M 8AE. Contact: Samantha Greshoff, at the RSM; tel 071-408 2119.

The First International Conference on Dietary Assessment Methods, "Assessing diets to improve world health", will take place in St Paul, Minnesota, USA, on September 20-23, 1992. Final date for receipt of abstracts January 15, 1992. For further information contact Department of Professional Development and Conference Services, 210 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Drive SE, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0139, USA; tel 612 625-3451; fax 612 626-1632.

Hazard control at the workplace: research and development of new risk prevention strategies. Fourth International Symposium of the ISSA Research Section, Strasbourg, 22-23 October 1992. Sections will cover risk analysis and appropriate prevention strategies, measurement of atmospheric pollution at the workplace, protective equipment, and changing technologies and their influence on human operators. Abstracts by 31 October 1991. Further details from INRS (attn C Skornik), 4 Colloque du Comité Recherche, 30 rue Oliver-Noyer, 75680 Paris Cedex 14, France.

The 24th International Congress on Occupational Health will take place in Nice, France, on September 26-October 1 1993. The aims of the congress are to bring together professionals in occupational medicine from around the world and to promote the development of scientific knowledge in the field. For further information contact: CO 24 France, "Les Miroirs", Cedex 27, 92096 Paris La Defense, France. Tel 33-1 47 62 33 70; Fax 33-1 47 62 31 53.

13th Scientific Meeting of The International Epidemiological Association: "New Pathways in Epidemiology". Date: September 26-30, 1993; place: Sydney, Australia; contact address: Conference Secretariat, 13th Scientific Meeting of the IEA, PO Box 746, Turramurra 2074, NSW, Australia; tel 61 2 449 1525, fax 61 2 488 7496.