A Short Course in Epidemiology. By Staffan E Norell. (Pp 181; price not stated.) New York: Raven Press, 1991. ISBN 0-88167-842-2.

This is an original book, different from other texts in epidemiology. It is a short course focused mainly on the validity of epidemiological investigations. The first chapter on cohort design is followed by chapters on systematic and random errors. The succeeding chapters address various designs of case-control studies. The book ends with a short discussion of choice of study design and interpretation of results.

The discussion on misclassification and its impact of the estimation of relative risk is excellent. There is a useful table giving estimated relative risks for different exposure frequencies, true relative risk levels, sensitivities, and specificities. There is another table on power calculation. Efficiency, ie, the precision in relation to the cost of a study, is well discussed throughout the text. The author classifies case-control studies into three groups. In "type A" case-control studies, information on exposure is collected prior to follow up. It is analysed when the follow up is completed, and only for the cases and a random sample of controls. In "type B" case-control studies, information on exposure is collected only after the cases have occurred. In "type C" case-control studies, controls selected at random from the population are not available but are, for example, replaced by hospital controls. The chapters on case-control studies are quite extensive. Unfortunately, in the following chapter, discussion of randomised control trials and other experiments is only given two pages. The chapter on interpretation of results is also very short. This book does not deal directly with the analysis of epidemiological data and is non-mathematical.

Strong points are that there are plenty of case studies, exercises with answers, and a list of 706 classical references on study design, validity, and efficiency in epidemiology. There is also a five page glossary.

Contrary to what is stated on the back cover, this is not a book on basic epidemiology. It is nonetheless an excellent intermediate short course in epidemiological design, well presented and easy to read.

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Cardiovascular Diseases: Genetics, Epidemiology, and Prevention. by James J Nora, Kåre Berg, and Audrey Hart Nora. (Pp 182; £35.) Oxford: OUP, 1991. ISBN 0-19-5060326.

As its title suggests, this book covers the genetics, epidemiology and prevention of cardiovascular defects and diseases, and gives a contemporary and readable account of these disorders. Firstly, the authors consider atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, and hypertension, common disorders the aetiology of which is determined by the interaction of a number of genes with lifestyle

factors. Although the involvement of thrombotic and other factors in coronary artery disease is mentioned, this chapter is heavily biased towards the role of lipids and lipoproteins. This is, understandably, a reflection of the particular research interests of the authors, but makes this particular chapter less than comprehensive. The following chapters cover genetic and environmental factors which contribute to congenital heart disease, with a separate discussion of the various defects and specific environmental agents. The next section deals with relatively rare single gene disorders and a number of syndromes, some of unknown origin and others due to chromosomal anomalies, where cardiovascular defects or disease are prominent features. Finally, there is discussion of what the future might bring, with particular emphasis on prevention and on the merits of population screening. Running throughout this book is the concept that genes cannot be considered in isolation from their environment, whether in vitro or in vivo, in terms of their contribution to the aetiology of a disease, especially a common one. This also applies to the converse situation, as illustrated by genetic predisposition to environmental teratogens, although this is likely to occur less frequently. The factor which distinguishes this book from many contemporaneous publications is that the authors place current knowledge in a historical and ethical context, making this book of interest to scientist and clinician alike.

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Science Challenging AIDS. Eds G Giraldo, B Rossi, E Beth-Giraldo, L Chieco-Bianchi, F Dianzani, G Giraldo, and P Verani. (Pp 300; price not stated.) Basel: Karger, 1991. ISBN 3-8055-5485.

This book tries to conjure up the spirit and structure of the VIIth International Conference on AIDS which was held in Florence in June 1991. It combines Master and State of the Art plenary lectures, the four "best papers" (selected by the editors), and five summary reports in its 300 pages. It is a good precis of the conference but some of the chapters suffer from a rushed "dictaphone" style.

The combative introduction by the Italian Minister of Public Health is followed by a paper by President Museveni of Uganda. His African perspective on HIV transmission calls for a change in sexual behaviour back to previous cultural practices of fidelity and condemnation of premarital sex and he is emphatic that condoms cannot be the main way of stemming the pandemic.

The master lectures are personal views which highlight important areas in biomedical research, progress in therapy, and AIDS in developing countries. These are written in a personable style and not only manage to give a sense of urgency to the pandemic but also set the scene for the plenary papers.

The plenaries include James Chin's clear and concise review of two World Health Organization models, one for short term projections of AIDS and the other an estimate of projected AIDS mortality in children. Gallo's anecdotal chapter on "AIDS and related malignancies" contrasts with Haseltine's grandiosely titled but excellent "Molecular biology of the AIDS virus: ten years of discovery—hope for the future." It is thought provoking and, more importantly, aimed at a wide audience. The book stays on course with Ian Weller's chapter on zidovudine treatment and the pitfalls in using surrogate markers of therapeutic outcome. The current optimism over AIDS vaccines is tempered by Bolognesi and then, back in the developing world, Mhloyi stresses the need to be able to cope with HIV at all levels in society especially when medical and welfare services are being overwhelmed.

One of the "best papers" compared the risk reduction and stabilisation of HIV seroprevalence among New York City drug injectors to those in Bangkok. Another used a multivariate analysis to examine the change in AIDS risk behaviours from adolescence to adulthood. These studies were well planned and their findings are directly applicable to HIV prevention programmes.

Readers with no time to plough through volumes of abstract books but who want to review the conference quickly should peruse the last five summary report chapters. However if one is really short of time, I would recommend reading just the epidemiology and prevention commentary, in spite of there being little mention of disease progression studies.

There was very little new or challenging to be found in this book but it does contain some excellent reviews of current knowledge and many of the chapters are very well referenced. Because of the diversity of material I cannot see individuals buying it, but most units interested in AIDS might want to invest in a copy even though the next conference is almost upon us.

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Short Reviews

Patterns of Referral. By J Bradlow, A Coutler, and P Brooks. (Pp 41; £4.50.) Oxford: Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford, 1992. ISBN 1-874551-00-6.

This report describes referral patterns from general practices to specialist outpatient clinics in the Oxford region. The results are based on information provided by 36 general practices on over 45 000 referrals made over a period of 10 months during 1990-1991.

The description of referral patterns will be useful to general practitioners as a baseline against which to compare their own referrals, to provider units, and to all those responsible for the assessment of health needs.

The ICD Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders. Clinical Descriptions and Diagnostic Guidelines. (Pp 370; SF 50.) Geneva: WHO, 1992. ISBN 92-4-154422-8.

This book, which was developed from chapter V of the Tenth Revision of the *International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems* (ICD-10), provides clinical descriptions, diagnostic guidelines, and codes for all mental and behavioural disorders commonly encountered in clinical psychiatry. The clinical descriptions and diagnostic guidelines were finalised after extensive field testing by over 700 clinicians and researchers in 110 institutes in 40 countries, making this book the product of the largest ever research effort designed to improve psychiatric diagnosis.

GERRY FOWKES

NOTICES

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. Further details from INRS (attn C Skornik), 4^e Colloque du Comité Recherche, 30 rue Oliver-Noyer, 75680 Paris Cedex 14, France.

World Congress on Tourist Medicine and Health. Date: 10-15 January 1993. Place: Singapore. Further details from: The Secretariat, 336 Smith Street No 06-303, New Bridge Centre, Singapore 0105; tel 65 2279811; fax 65 2270257

6th Asian Congress of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health. Date: January 22-24, 1993. Place: Loni, Maharashtra, India. Topics include maternal and child health, environmental hazards, primary health care, economics of health care. Further details from: Dr N S Mhaske (Organising Secretary), 6th Asian Congress, Pravara Medical Trust, Loni 413 736, Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India; Fax No: 91-24225-2413.

Child Safety in Southern Africa—a multidisciplinary conference on injury prevention. Date 8-10 February 1993; place: Cape Town. South Africa. Further information: Miss Deborah McTeer, Postgraduate Medical Centre, UCT Medical School, Observatory, 7925 Republic of South Africa; tel 21 47 1250, fax 21 448 6263.

International conference on **Dysfunctions of Mind and body in the Elderly; Assessment and Interventions.** Date: March 18-20 1993. Place: Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Further details from: Conference Secretariat, SOGG, PO Box 23115, 3001 KC Rotterdam, The Netherlands; tel 31 10 4367577; fax 31 10 4367273

International conference on **Chronic Diseases and Changing Care Patterns in and Aging Society.** Date: 9-11 June 1993. Place: Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Deadline for abstracts: October 31, 1992. Further details from: Dr Trudi van den Bos, Institute of Social Medicine, University of Amsterdam, Meibergdreef 15, 1105 AZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands, tel 31 20 5664707; fax 31 20 6912401

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, Turrumurra 2074, NSW, Australia; tel 61 2 449 1525, fax 61 2 488 7496.

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