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NOTICES

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Editorial note on journal development. *P-G Svensson, J Palm*

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The relation between the number of symptoms and other health indicators in working men and women. *I Foppa, RH Noack*

Suicide reporting in Swiss print media: responsible or irresponsible? *C Frey, K Michel, L Valach*

Predictors of disability pension among young men: the role of alcohol and psychosocial factors. *M Upmark, T Hemmingsson, A Romelsjö, I Lundberg, P Allebeck*

Oral contraception and smoking: time trends for a risk behaviour in Finland. *EA-L Kosunen, AH Rimpelä, JA Kaprio, M-A Berg*

Appropriateness of hospital use: report from an Italian study. *G Apolone, G Fellin, A Tampieri, E Bonanoni, PF Crosti, E Lanzi, G Meregalli, G Trocino, A Liberati*

Dietary intake of some food items in smokers and non-smokers in a Mediterranean population. *M Martínez-González, R Pérez-Gutiérrez, J Martínez-González, M García-Martin, A Bueno-Cavanillas*

Income distribution and cause-specific mortality. *SJ McIsaac, RG Wilkinson*

Effects of primary health care reform on the prescription of antibiotics: a longitudinal study in a Spanish county. *S Juncosa, M Porta*

Hospital strategy reform in Romania: an experiment in Bucharest in 1993. *A-L Le Faou, A Marlier-Sutter, D Jolly*

Mammographic screening

Economic evaluation of a mammography-based breast cancer screening programme in Spain. *R Garuz, T Forcén, J Cabasés, F Antónanzas, C Trinxet, J Rovira, F Antón*

How susceptible is the Antwerp female population to mammographic screening? *GF Van Hal, JF Weyler, MM Marthyssen*

Perinatal and child health

Pre-natal care and prevention of low birth weight: a case-control study in southern Spain. *M Gómez-Olmedo, M Delgado-Rodríguez, A Bueno Cavanillas, A Herruzo Nalda, R Gálvez-Vargas*

Ethnic differences in rates of infant mortality and sudden infant death syndrome in

Sweden, 1978 to 1990. *CEM Oldenburg, F Rasmussen, NU Cotten*

Childhood immunization: meeting targets yet respecting consent. *P Alderson, B Mayall, S Barker, J Henderson, B Pratten*

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A graphical display useful for meta-analysis. *FJ Jiménez, E Guallar, JM Martin-Moreno*

Association of waist to hip ratio with diabetes among middle-aged subjects with impaired glucose tolerance. *Q Qiao, S Keiänen-Kiukaanniemi, S-L Kivela*

A population-based study of familial clustering of inflammatory bowel disease in Florence. *D Palli, C Saieva, G Trallori, G Bardazzi, G d'Albasio, M Milla, M Galli, O Tarantino, F Pacini*

Letter to the editor

News

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Calendar of events

EUPHA section

Epidemiology—past and future. A joint meeting between the UK Society for Social Medicine and the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* is to be held on Thursday, October 30, 1997 at the Weston Theatre, Manchester Conference Centre, UMIST from 10.00—16.30. Further details from Professor Charles Florey, Dept of Epidemiology and Community Health, Ninewells Hospitals and Medical School, Dundee DD1 9SY. Tel 01 + 382 632124. Fax 01 + 382 644197

Good Occupational Health Practice and Evaluation of Occupational Health Services, 8–10 June 1998, Hanasaari Cultural Centre, Espoo, Finland. Themes: good occupational health practice, evaluation, future perspectives. Deadline for abstracts: 31 January 1998. For further information: Ms Inkeri Haataja, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Topeliuksenkatu 41 aA, FIN-00250 Helsinki. Tel: +358 9 474 7470. Fax: +358 9 474 7548. email: Inkeri.Haataja@occuphealth.fi. <http://www.occuphealth.fi/tiedotus/gohp>.

BOOK REVIEWS

A simulation model for the future analysis of cardiovascular disease (with program diskette). O J Vriez, G M Boas, and J A H Janssen. A report commissioned by the Steering Committee on Future Health Scenarios (STG). (Pp 388; £45.00) Utrecht: International Books, 1995. ISBN 90-6224-878-0.

Health planning consists of formulating health goals and the means necessary for achieving these. Planning is thus a rational way of allocating resources so that the future can be steered in the most desirable direction. Setting objectives involves projecting foreseeable health scenarios, contrasting situations where healthcare intervention is absent and then where it is present. It is, therefore, extremely useful to have a software package capable of formulating future scenarios linked to the frequency of cardiovascular disease, and exploring the consequences thereof on the health of the general population, the pub-

lic health system, and, in particular, the distribution of any related costs.

The software package, designed for DOS-based computers, comes complete with a user's manual which includes full information on the cardiovascular disease model used, development of the financial aspects, plus a wide ranging review of current knowledge on risk factors for cardiovascular disease and the efficacy of available preventive measures and methods of treatment.

The software is user friendly. Construction of scenarios and evaluation of the ensuing consequences requires data on: cardiovascular disease risk factor distribution in the target population; the expected effect of healthcare intervention on this distribution; cardiovascular disease incidence and fatality; and the natural history of the process in the absence of intervention. The fact that experts from the Mathematics, Health Economics, and Cardiology Departments at Limburg University collaborated on this project has ensured that both software and manual are marked by methodological rigour. In all three disciplines, book and diskette will prove a useful tool to those interested in health planning and a source of inspiration for the development of new products in this field.

Lastly, though software and manual are of universal interest, the fact that they are specifically based on the Dutch population and related cardiovascular risk factor distribution detracts somewhat from the program's utility vis-à-vis other populations. Furthermore, it would have lent greater insight, had the manual contained some information on the experience and impressions of Holland's Public Health Authority planners on using this software in the course of their routine work.

FERNANDO RODRÍGUEZ ARTALEJO
Professor of Preventive Medicine and Public Health,
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.

Management of neurological disorders. Edited by CM Wiles. (Pp 341; £24.95). London: BMJ Publishing Group, 1995. ISBN 0-7279-0903-7.

This book will either delight or slightly disappoint depending on the aims of the reader. It is a compilation of articles previously published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* on the management of a wide variety of chronic neurological conditions, including meningitis. The book is well written, clear, and in general easy to read. It has useful summary boxes to highlight key points. The authors are all experts in their respective fields, and the chapters have fairly extensive references. Refreshingly, the authors have been encouraged to conclude their reviews with a section on auditing clinical care. This is done with less consistent success and perhaps reflects more the novelty of audit in neurology than any specific failings of the contributors. I was particularly pleased to see and enjoyed reading two chapters on "Resources and facilities" and "Neurorehabilitation", areas that are often neglected.

This book will be most useful for junior level hospital physicians, general practitioners, and medical students and is to be recommended. However, for public health physicians and purchasers it is of limited value or perhaps can be used as a first source of information. The sections on audit are on the "sketchy" side and the epidemiological content would make "needs assessment" difficult. Sur-

prisingly, no mention is made of the need to notify cases of meningitis to the CCDC under the section entitled "chemoprophylaxis".

The book was clearly written before the growing rise of evidence-based medicine and therefore there is little depiction of the pros and cons of various treatment strategies in a systematic fashion, or meta-analyses of pooled trials. Given the success of the Cochrane Collaboration, this will, I suspect, be addressed in the future. I look forward to reading the next edition.

YOAV BEN-SHLOMO
Senior Lecturer in Clinical Epidemiology,
Department of Social Medicine,
University of Bristol.

Annual Report of the Director 1994. Pan American Health Organization (Pp 228; no price stated) Washington: PAHO, 1995. ISBN 92-75-17271.

In the introduction to this report the director Dr George Alleyne (Barbados) states that the purpose of the document is to summarise the technical cooperation activities of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the World Health Organization. This is a good description of the book's contents which comprise 17 short chapters in the first half, including topics such as Health Situation and Trend Assessment; Health Policy Development; Human Resources Development; Maternal and Child Health; Primary Health Care; Food and Nutrition; Health Promotion, etc. The second half of the book is devoted to individual country reports.

The report provides an excellent summary of all the active health programmes operating on the American continent and has a sum-

mary of the history, structure, and funding of PAHO. There are 35 member governments which include Canada and Cuba; France, Netherlands, and the UK are designated as participating governments. Achievements such as the elimination of wild-type poliomyelitis in the continent in 1994 (a major eradication programme was started in 1985) and targets such as the eradication of measles by the year 2000 are reported. However, baseline demographic and epidemiological data by country are not reported but are to be found elsewhere in a separately-published statistical bulletin. This deficiency of data makes the achievements of the individual programmes difficult for the reader to assess.

This report is essential material for those involved in health policy development, particularly in developing countries. Some additional summary statistical data would provide a key resource document for epidemiologists and public health specialists. Should this be possible in future reports it is likely that a wide general readership would be engendered.

JOHN W G YARNELL
Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast.

Cancer Wars: How politics shapes what we know and don't know about cancer. Robert N Proctor. (Pp 356; \$25.00) New York: Basic Books, 1995. ISBN 0-465-02756-3.

This is primarily an account of the history of the debates about the causes of cancer. These debates have usually been controversial because many carcinogenic substances have been, and many still are, at the heart of the business of large companies.

The early chapters present a chronological account of cancer and its causes beginning with the 19th century, going on to the early 20th century advocates of environmental causation, Wilhelm Hueper and Rachel Carson, and then dealing with the stormy debates of the 1970s and 1980s. The succeeding chapters deal with the activities of industrial research bodies, the importance of natural carcinogens (in particular, the views of Bruce Ames), the history of dose-response curves, radioactive substances, and individual susceptibility to cancer. Finally, there is a chapter entitled "How Can We Win The War?" The book therefore covers a huge amount of ground. There are just two subjects to which only passing reference is made, and they are the roles played by viral agents and by diet in the causes of cancer.

One of the many strengths of this fine book is its account of how science is distorted by those whose commercial interests are threatened. The sections on the way the tobacco and asbestos industries have behaved catalogue the techniques of denial, obfuscation and science as public relations. Sometimes research is promoted which produces results which contradict previous findings (Gibson's law—"For every PhD there is an equal and opposite PhD"). But more often the aim is to create doubt and controversy in order to subvert research results which are not consistent with a company's interests.

Proctor makes it clear that although this book is history, the story is far from over. In 1992 Philip Morris made \$4.9bn profit, more money than any other company in the United States.

SHAUN MURPHY
Department of Social Medicine,
University of Bristol.