

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.

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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.

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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.

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