

### **International Occupational and Environmental Medicine.**

*Edited by Jessica A. Herzstein, William B. Bunn, and Lora E. Fleming. 768 pp. St. Louis, Mosby Year Book, 1998. \$115. ISBN 0-8151-4362-1.*

In addition to treating family health problems, family physicians are increasingly called upon to treat occupational illness and injury. There are simply not enough specialists in the field to shoulder the burden, and occupational medicine has always been an integral part of family practice.

This book is more than a good text and reference, it is a good read. It comes with an excellent pedigree: 3 editors, 3 coeditors, 71 contributors, 13 associate contributors, and 34 international advisors. The result is a healthy mix of private practitioners, consultants, corporate medical directors, government officials, and university professors from around the world.

The book is divided into eight parts. Part I, Global Issues, contains seven chapters. The chapters on international labor issues and globalization of business enterprise are fascinating and would be of interest to any informed person in the global marketplace. Maintaining worker health and safe work practices is becoming ever more difficult as US and international companies move into countries with different attitudes on unions and worker health.

Part II, Ethical, Economic, and Legal Issues, contains seven chapters, the most interesting of which, "Ethical Challenges," gives a review of ethical dilemmas facing occupational and environmental medicine (OEM) physicians. Particularly interesting are several case studies drawn from actual experience of the authors.

Part III, Occupational and Environmental Health Programs In the International Setting, is a cookbook (as it should be) on how to set up an OEM program overseas and does a good job of outlining steps a physician needs to make.

Part IV, International Health Care Systems, is a review of the health-related immigration requirements, recommended immunizations, malaria status, illnesses and other health concerns, medical facilities and capabilities, and safety and security considerations for each

country by region. Obviously this section was obsolete the day after it was written, which the authors admit, but the information is extremely helpful in dealing with professionals from other countries or in sending employees to those countries. It also gives an idea of the questions a family physician should ask when preparing a patient or client company for international travel or work.

Part V, Occupational Hazards and Populations, has an excellent chapter on vulnerable populations that covers new ground in an in-depth review of child labor, aging and work, and migrant workers. Two figures (32-2 and 32-3) portray geographically the migrations of workers around the world. Just by looking at those figures it is possible to imagine the legal, health, regulatory, and emotional burdens migrations place on workers and employers alike.

Part VI, Environmental Hazards and Populations, contains a very good chapter on food safety and an interesting discussion of mad cow disease. Part VII, Disasters and Emergency Preparedness, reviews natural and chemical disasters from the standpoint of what went wrong and what could have been improved. Chernobyl and Bophal, of course, are reviewed in detail. Part V, Resources in International Occupational and Environmental Medicine, contains four lists of resources to update and expand upon the information given in the book.

Criticisms? Not really. The book accomplishes the task the authors set out in the foreword—to provide a concise guide to physicians practicing in the global market. This book is not for every physician's bookshelf unless one is actively involved in international health issues. It is, however, an excellent reference for a hospital, clinic, or university library. Many chapters are good reading and extremely interesting on their own merits. The case studies, bibliographies, and numerous references make the book a good jumping-off spot if a family physician is called upon to set up an OEM practice in a developing country or advise workers migrating to or from North America.

James E. Lessenger, MD  
Porterville, Calif