

Buchbesprechungen/Analyses de livres

Alcohol Drinking

IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, Lyon: 13–30 October 1987, Chairman O. Moller-Jensen, IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, Volume 44, Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer, 1988, 416 p, softbound, SFr 65.–, ISBN 92-832-1244-4, ISSN 0250-9555

The acquired knowledge on the carcinogenicity of alcoholic beverages has benefitted from the synergistic interaction of contributions from epidemiology, from biological data and from chemical analysis. This book is designed to reflect the complementarity of all these approaches. The areas covered include all of the following: the production and consumption of alcoholic beverages as well as the chemical components of these beverages. The book also describes the mutagenicity associated with these chemical components and evaluates the risk of cancer they represent for both animals and humans. A review of descriptive and analytical data obtained in epidemiologic studies is presented.

The annexes and the cross-sectional index which represent about one fifth of the book are mainly oriented towards the numerous chemicals encountered in congeners. Conceived as a tool for public health practice, this work presents the available evidence on the predictive factors for developing cancer at any site without sacrificing scientific quality. This 44th volume of the monograph series covers a field where the international Agency for Research on Cancer has been strongly stimulating and coordinating research activities for several decades. About 50 international experts have contributed to the production of this valuable reference book.

Bernard Junod, Rennes

Hospitals and the Health Care Revolution

LHW. Paine, F. Siem Tjam, Geneva: World Health Organization, 1988; 114 pp, softbound, SFr 20.–, ISBN 92-4-156116-5

In an informal and anecdotal style, this book presents examples from all over the world showing how the relationships between hospitals and their patients, and between hospitals and the wider health system, are changing. In the first 4 chapters the authors argue that the biggest health improvements have generally been produced by better nutrition and living conditions, and by healthy behaviour patterns, rather than by high technology hospital services, and this remains true today, whether it be to control cardiovascular disease, cancer and accidents in developed countries, or communicable diseases in the third world.

The authors go on to propose that no hospital should be allowed to remain an isolated center of medical technology, but that all should be an integral part of a community oriented health system, and numerous examples are given of the successful development of this philosophy.

In chapter five, the authors discuss the importances of the district health system as a basic unit in the integration of hospital and community health services. The next three chapters then outline the problems of implementation, and provide suggestions for overcoming them, in the areas of organization, attitudes and training, and financing and referral systems. The final chapter rounds up the discussion with a brief summary of what needs to be done, what has been achieved, and what remains.

Light in style and short in length, this book is easily read, and its message is so important that it should be compulsory reading for health policy makers and senior hospital staff, as much in developed as in developing countries.

The only complaint one can make is that the book quotes WHO directors and WHO publications verbatim and at length, with a frequency which borders on the sycophantic. WHO is one actor among many in this field, and not necessarily the most important one. A little more modesty and a wider selection of references would have been both more equitable and more convincing.

Adrian Griffiths, Geneva

Gesundheit verkaufen?

Praxis der Gesundheitskommunikation

R. Krause, H. Eisele, R. J. Lauer et al., Sankt Augustin: Asgard-Verlag, Dr. Werner Hippe KG, 1989, 216 S, broschiert, DM 52.–, ISBN 3-537-78601-8

Das Buch will dem Leser vermitteln, worauf bei der Gestaltung von Medienkampagnen im Bereich der Gesundheitsförderung zu achten ist. Einleitend betonen die Autoren, dass es immer um Einstellungs- und Verhaltensänderungen gehe – auf die Beschreibung der relevanten psychologischen Grundlagen werde denn auch besonderer Wert gelegt. Zur Vereinfachung des komplexen Themas wird das Buch in drei Teile gegliedert: Zuerst wird die Frage «Gesundheit verkaufen – aber wie?» zu beantworten versucht. Im zweiten Teil werden acht bekannte Kampagnen zur «Gesundheitskommunikation in Aktion» vorgestellt und evaluiert. Zum Schluss erfährt der Leser allerlei Wissenswertes zum Umgang mit Instrumentarien der Gesundheitskommunikation. Hier wird u. a. der Frage nachgegangen, wie Kommunikationsprofis behandelt werden wollen ... Das Buch will laut Vorwort ... «Vorurteilen begegnen und die Notwendigkeit offensiver aber sensibler Kommunikation für die Gesundheitsförderung belegen». Wird das Ziel erreicht? Wer dieses Buch zur Hand nimmt, wird schon beim Durchblättern fasziniert sein: Erklärungen wechseln sich ab mit Illustrationen; Forderungen an gute Beispiele mit praktischen Ratschlägen usw. Die modellhafte Gestaltung weckt Interesse, vermittelt Einsichten und schärft die Wahrnehmung: prägnante, kurze Sätze, aktuelle Themen und Beispiele – eben so wie es sein sollte! Die Palette der präsentierten Medien und Methoden der Gesundheitskommunikation ist breit. Deren Einsatz wird an bekannten Kampagnen anschaulich und nachvollziehbar demonstriert. Vieles hat Bekanntheitscharakter – das Interesse bleibt trotzdem erhalten. Der Leser wird motiviert – das Gefühl, es selber auch einmal zu probieren steigt – und darin liegt die Gefahr des Buches: Phantasie und Kreativität werden vorausgesetzt!

Roland Lüthi, Bern

Präventive Gerontologie

Gesund älter werden

K. Biener, Bern, Stuttgart: Hans Huber, 1990, 103 S, 29 Tab, kartoniert, SFr 28.–/DM 32.–, ISBN 3-456-81844-0

Präventive Gerontologie mit seinem Untertitel «Gesund älter werden» legt auf knappem Raum überzeugend dar, dass eine gesunde Lebensweise – die unter anderem durch körperliche Bewegung, angemessene sportliche Betätigung, richtige Ernährung nebst Vermeidung sonstiger Risikofaktoren bestimmt ist – eine gute Voraussetzung liefert, tatsächlich gesund älter zu werden und im Alter gesund zu sein. Die Anliegen des Autors gelten vor allem der körperlichen Ertüchtigung als präventivem Prinzip. Recht detailliert wird über die Bedeutung von sportlicher Aktivität in der Beziehung zu zahlreichen weiteren physiologischen und sozioökonomischen Faktoren, die das Alter prägen, berichtet. Zahlreiche Untersuchungen zeigen übereinstimmend, dass sportlich aktive Männer und Frauen in fast allen Belangen besser abschneiden als inaktive. Verschiedene Studien, die im Raume Zürich durchgeführt wurden, werden dargestellt. In den nach 98 Schlagwörtern geordneten knappen, gut lesbaren Texten findet sich eine präzise, auch für den Laien gut verständliche Zusammenfassung der angesprochenen Themen. Personen, die sich für die Leistungsfähigkeit und den Gesundheitszustand unserer aktiven, selbständigen, zu Hause lebenden betagten Bevölkerung interessieren, liefert das Büchlein viele Hinweise. Die Lektüre ist für jeden Leser ein persönlicher Gewinn. Sie ist besonders für den in der Altersarbeit Tätigen zu empfehlen.

Hannes B. Stähelin, Basel

Polychlorinated Dibenzo-para-dioxins and Dibenzofurans

WHO Task Group meeting on Environmental Health Criteria for Polychlorinated Dibenzo-para-dioxins and Dibenzofurans, Environmental Health Criteria 88, publ. by IPCS International Programme on Chemical Safety, Geneva: World Health Organization, 1989, 409 pp, softbound, SFr 40.-, ISBN 92-4-154288-8, ISSN 0250-863X

The reviewer of this volume cannot but cite two expert views on dioxins *verbatim* «Concern that this material is harmful to health or the environment may be misplaced» (Fred H. Tschirley, *Scientific American*, 254: 21, 1986) and «Thus, the present exposure of the general population to environmental levels of TCDD and related compounds should not be of concern» (Renate D. Kimbrough, *J. Toxicol Environ Health* 30: 261, 1990). This is not meant to slight the work of experts covered in more than 300 pages of text and voluminous literature. This is only to show that even scientific discussion on the subject is loaded with the extreme views and if uninitiated reader tries to form an idea of the hazard involved with dioxins, the conclusions may not be straightforward. Current situation may be rapidly outlined by stating that IARC (Lyon) has classified the dioxins in group 3 as a human carcinogen (inadequate data). Recent 34-year analysis after an accident in 1953 seems to corroborate this (Zober et al, *Int Arch Occup Environ Health* 62: 139, 1990). As to other disease endpoints, the follow-up of the Seveso accident victims shows that apart from the chloracne no major morbidity has been found. So, perhaps, there is some reason in the cited views above. The WHO task group has recommended that research on the subject should continue for a more accurate evaluation.

Heikki Savolainen, Lausanne

Chlorophenols other than Pentachlorophenol

WHO Task Group meeting on Environmental Health Criteria for Chlorophenols other than Pentachlorophenol, Environmental Health Criteria 93, publ. by IPCS International Programme on Chemical Safety, Geneva: World Health Organization, 1989, 208 pp, softbound, SFr 22.-, ISBN 92-4-154293-4, ISSN 0250-863X

The task group responsible for the creation of this monograph convened in Geneva in March, 1988. The delay of the publication of their work is quite usual although it is a minor handicap to those in need of a very recent literature. It is also a reflection of the invited experts which references are cited and which are omitted, especially, when the subject matter is large. Nevertheless, one wonders whether the problems of chlorophenol absorption on various clays in the environment was treated unintentionally only as an interesting detail although it has a major impact on the toxicity of chlorophenols and their contaminants (Umbreit et al, *Science*, 232: 497, 1986).

The mechanism(s) of the chronic toxicity of the chlorophenol compounds remain unknown as pointed out in the volume. Various endpoints have been described in the current literature. One unproven hypothesis has been that the chlorophenols could

change the lipid metabolism in a similar manner as their distant congener, clofibrate. This seems not to be case in animal experiments (e.g. work from Fuller's laboratory: *Proc Soc Exp Biol Med* 191: 139, 1989) or in clinical studies (Suskind & Hertzberg, *Jama* 251: 2372, 1984) also cited by the authors of the book at hand. The criteria document is a useful compilation of chlorophenol literature. Its major utility is to show the rather large research needs still in the field.

Heikki Savolainen, Lausanne

Complex Mixtures and Cancer Risk

H. Vainio, M. Sorsa, A. J. McMichael (eds), IARC Scientific Publications No. 104, Lyon: International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO), 1990, 442 pp, softbound, SFr 38.-, ISBN 92-832-2104-4, ISSN 0300-5085

This is a complex volume which considers and discusses a difficult issue, the potential cancer risks associated with exposure to multitudes of chemicals as complex mixtures. In this process, problems arise from uncertainties in assessing the risk of each identified substance, in evaluating their different biological effects and their interaction in biological as well as statistical terms, in defining ranges of dose and other exposure measures, including difficulties in extrapolation to low dose exposure. Clearly, only a restricted number of defined guidelines can be derived from the volume, which, however, still represents a useful, multidisciplinary approach to such a complex problem.

Some of the chapters are of special interest, such as Montesano's contribution on approaches to detecting individual exposure, Kaldor and L'Abbé's discussion on interaction, Bartsch and Malaveille's review of the IARC Monograph series, or Hemminki et al's chapter on DNA adducts. Other sections are of more specific and defined interest and, as in most multiauthorship volumes derived from a workshop, the importance and value of various contributions is somewhat variable.

From an epidemiological viewpoint, there are at least two general observations. First, an assessment of carcinogenic risk from exposure to complex mixtures has been, to date, often derived from epidemiological observations and investigations, even in the absence of accurate definition of risks related to each simple exposure, and this tends to be somewhat understated in the volume. Second, duration of exposure has generally a much greater role on subsequent cancer risk than dose, and again, at a superficial analysis of the publication, this basic concept may be overlooked.

These are, however, minor (and probably somewhat biased) observations, which cannot eclipse the importance of the publication in terms of offering a series of relevant and important contributions towards possible progress in cancer risk assessment for such frequent exposures to the general population.

Carlo La Vecchia, Lausanne and Milano