

BOOK REVIEW

Occupational and Environmental Health - A Practical Manual

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This book written by Prof Wai-on Phoon and Dr Ramnik Parekh, and with contributions of seven other eminent occupational health professionals, is a useful addition to the literature in this discipline. It is aimed at providing important and reliable information that could be applied to real life situations in the workplace and communities. The book is divided into seven sections and an annex with a total of 56 chapters. The emphasis in this book is on occupational health. The chapters in Section I, the only section devoted to environmental health, provide an overview of principles of environmental health and pollution control. The chapters (information) in this section are brief and could have been improved. Chapters in Section II discuss about the principles of occupational health (good insight on role of stakeholders), changing nature of work and the worker in relation to the community. The methods used in occupational health practice, including history taking, medical examination, biological monitoring, occupational hygiene, have been fairly well described in the chapters in Section III. The questionnaires included, which will need adapting based on where they are used, are useful for the practitioner. The chapters in Section IV cover occupational and environmental exposures (e.g. physical, chemical and biological hazards,

psychological stress). Section V and VI are devoted to providing information on occupational health practices related to special sectors (e.g. women workers, ageing workers, seafarers and migrant workers etc.) and to special problems (e.g. tobacco control, sickness absence, shift work, ethics, genetic factors etc). The final section on organisation and delivery of occupational health services provides excellent insight into occupational health from the perspective of a multinational and a national conglomerate. The Annex section is a useful addition to the chapters. However, the annex on useful sources of further information on occupational health could have been expanded. Names of useful text and reference books and journals in the discipline could have been added. References on Health-based Limit Values were old and need updating. Overall the book provides occupational health practitioners from developing countries a useful practical manual at a cost they can afford.

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