

Inhalation Toxicology, 2nd edition. Harry Salem, Sidney A Katz, editors. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC/Taylor & Francis. 2006. Hard cover, illustrated, 1,034 pages, \$189.94.

There is a surprising paucity of recent inhalational toxicology texts. Phalen's *Methods in Inhalation Toxicology* is nearly 10 years old and self-admittedly unintended as a comprehensive text. The latest edition of McClellan's *Concepts in Inhalation Toxicology*, though excellent, is over a decade old. So it would appear that **Inhalation Toxicology** is perfectly poised to become the standard text in this field. Unfortunately, it falls far short and cannot be recommended as a replacement for either of the above. This is not to say that the book has no merits, for it excels in specific topics, as noted below. Yet as a comprehensive text, it has several major shortcomings in its aim to "provide the practicing professional as well as the aspiring student with a pragmatic textbook." Such vagueness as to the intended audience is reflected in the book's poor organization and inconsistent depth.

The book itself is attractive enough, with a nice cover graphic that highlights the interface between the upper and lower airways. The book's compact dimensions are efficient for a large text and make for easy handling. However, with my copy, after just a few openings a large crack emerged along the front cover crease, making me question its sturdiness.

The organization of the book is a primary concern. Part I is titled "Inhalation Toxicology Methods and Measurements," and Part II is titled "Inhalation Toxicology Methods." This bizarre, redundant structure is even more perplexing when one considers the specific chapters within. Praise goes to the few chapters that cover the fundamental topics one would expect in such a text; Chapter 8, "Toxic Load Modeling," and Chapter 18, "Toxicokinetics," as examples, fairly treat these critical concepts. However, many of the chapters in Parts I and II are extremely specific, without clear justification for their scattered inclusion among the treatments of the (by consequence, nearly hidden) principal conceptual chapters. For example, Chapter 5 is "Low-Level Effects of VX Vapor Exposure on Pupil Size and Cholinesterase Levels in Rats." Besides its highly questionable placement early in the methods section, it would appear to be far afield from the appropriate level of interest of all but the most differentiated of students.

That said, there is some helpful material within this disorderliness, for those with particular interests. For example, the first chapter is dedicated to the process of inhalation risk assessment at the United States Environmental Protection Agency. It does provide a nice outline of the agency's framework, and it incidentally does a nice job of treating fairly difficult but important concepts, such as the No Observed Adverse Effects Level (NOAEL).

Chapter 2, on acute exposure guideline levels, and Chapter 3, "Emergency Response Planning Guidelines," thoroughly discuss these issues, though I wonder why 2 entire chapters are devoted to such specifics that are scarcely mentioned (appropriately) in McClellan's text. A brief look at Chapter 4, "Directed-Flow Aerosol Inhalational Exposure Systems: Application to Pathogens and Highly Toxic Agents," makes the same point in a slightly different way: why focus specifically on pathogens and highly toxic agents before broadly and clearly introducing the topic of inhalation exposure system in general? Some of the chapters are simply inappropriately named. For example, from the title of Chapter 7, "The Use of Large Animals for Inhalation Toxicology," one would not know that most of the chapter is dedicated to phosgene toxicity in pigs.

Part III, "Inhalational Toxicology of Materials," is more logical than Parts I and II, but I nonetheless wonder how the specific materials were chosen. Chapter 27 is a fine outline of issues related to asbestos, but there is no similar overview of silica toxicology.

Part IV, "Inhalational Toxicology of Bioaerosols," is an understandable reflection of contemporary bio-terrorism concerns, but it nonetheless seems somewhat unbalanced to have such extensive treatment of this topic while some basic topics get relatively little coverage.

All that said, the book's language is generally quite readable. There are few typographical errors. For those who are interested in the book because of the many specific topics that are not treated sufficiently elsewhere, the index is fairly extensive. The illustrations are rather basic but generally clear. Surprisingly, however, there is not a single graphic on basic respiratory-tract particle dosimetry. The references are accurate and extensive, though subject to the above limitations regarding breadth of topics covered overall.

In summary, **Inhalation Toxicology's** greatest strength is its detailed treatment of

several highly specific topics within the field. If one happens to be interested in, for example, inhaled ricin, there is an entire chapter dedicated to this. However, as a fundamental text for those wanting a comprehensive treatment of the field, it cannot be recommended. The organization is seriously problematic and does not allow for systematic learning. The time remains ripe for an updated standard inhalational toxicology text.

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Oxford Handbook of Respiratory Medicine. Stephen Chapman, Grace Robinson, John Stradling, Sophie West. *Oxford Handbook* series. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. 2005. Flexible cover, illustrated, 757 pages, \$45.

The **Oxford Handbook of Respiratory Medicine** is a pocket-sized book that covers the presentation and management of not only specific respiratory disorders, but symptom complexes as well. It is a welcome addition to the *Oxford Handbook* series, which covers both medical and surgical specialties. The stated intended audience is "specialist registrars" (the United Kingdom equivalent of a person in fellowship training). Indeed, 3 of the 4 authors were specialist registrars at the time of the writing. The book's intent is primarily to be a pocket reference for pulmonary fellows or residents or students with a special interest in pulmonary medicine. With that said, I believe this book would also be a very useful reference for nurses who care for patients with pulmonary disorders or respiratory therapists, either practicing or in training.

The book is laid out into 5 sections. The first section contains 14 chapters. All are fairly short and concise, the longest being 12 pages. The focus is on more generalized symptom complexes such as breathlessness, hemoptysis, evaluation of pulmonary infiltrates based on immune status, and evaluation of breathlessness in postoperative and pregnant patients. I found this section particularly useful, because often this is how, as practitioners, we first encounter the patient: without a known diagnosis, but merely a symptom. The chapters in this section typ-