
This book is, in general, well written, informative, well presented, a convenient size, and easy to read. It has 9 well-organized chapters and 2 useful appendixes. The book starts with essential basics and conventional treatments and then proceeds to natural therapies. Its aim is to help both clinicians and patients who deal with emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to understand the available natural and alternative therapies.

The well set out introduction covers the impact of COPD, principles of natural health care, and how to use the book. Chapter 1, which deals with the anatomy and physiology, I think is a bit too detailed for the general public, but a good summary. Chapter 2 defines COPD and explains the symptoms and causes. Chapter 3, which focuses on diagnosis and conventional treatments, is well written, especially given how difficult it is to find the correct balance between thoroughness and brevity. I am concerned that after reading this chapter some patients (or a patient’s relative) might demand tests that the physician does not deem necessary. About treatments I think the book is a bit too nihilistic, especially with regard to steroid treatment.

Chapter 4 is excellent and I think it will help people quit smoking. Chapter 5, which gives nutrition advice, is also very useful, though I was alarmed at what it said regarding fasting. Chapter 6 is a very thorough overview of dietary supplements in a “holistic” approach, but I am a bit worried that some patients might see taking dietary supplements as an easier approach than eating a well-balanced diet and pursuing a healthy life style.

Chapter 7 details an approach to herbal medicines. I would have liked to see pictures of the herbs. Chapter 8 describes exercises, breathing techniques, and other therapies that are also part of the conventional allopathic armamentarium and will benefit all patients with COPD. The final chapter is on other alternatives and considerations. Appendix 1 lists reliable alternative medicine practitioners.

In summary, this is a valuable book for both the general public and clinicians, and provides an in-depth approach to natural therapies for COPD and emphysema.

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This work is part of a series edited by Malcolm Chase of the Society for the Study of Labour History at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. The series addresses “broad themes in labour history,” with a consideration of worker health in the context of society and family, and provides an “international and transnational perspective” to allow reinterpretation of known histories. Other books in this series would also be of interest to a reader investigating mine workers and mine culture (http://www.ashgate.com).

The authors are well established in this area. Johnston is a Reader in History at Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, and has published in occupational and labor history. McIvor, a Professor at University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, has research interests in the history of work, occupational health, and oral history. His other books include A History of Work in Britain, 1880-1950 (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2001), Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-1950 (John Donald, 1992), Employers and Labour in the English Textile Industries, 1850-1939 (Routledge, 1988). These 2 authors also collaborated on Lethal Work: A History of the Asbestos Tragedy in Scotland (Tuckwell Press, 2000).

Miners’ Lung: A History of Dust Disease in British Coal Mining traces the story of the British coal mining industry and the effects on worker respiratory health from the late nineteenth century to the present in South Wales, Scotland, and Northeast England. The book includes oral histories and worker testimony and focuses on the body of the worker and the consequences of illness to his work and family life. The authors state that they wished to present a social history of mining from the point of view of the miner’s body and explore the “devastation wreaked upon mining communities by inhaling dust at work.” They have sought to address an “evident gap in the historiography of coal mining,” namely a failure to integrate industry, trade union, and medical perspectives with the experience of the worker and his illness. The book has 4 parts:

Part 1 describes the authors’ methodology, which includes extensive research and oral histories from workers and family members, an occupational hygienist, and litigators.

Part 2 covers medical knowledge about coal workers’ pneumoconiosis, the contributions of epidemiology, including the National Coal Board’s 25-pit study, and the development of the understanding that bronchitis and emphysema are caused by coal dust inhalation.

Part 3 covers the roles of the state, the National Coal Board, mine owners, and the trade unions in the recognition and prevention of the respiratory effects of working with coal. This section also addresses dust-control strategies and the forces that influenced the establishment and enforcement of standards.

Part 4 includes the perspectives of workers. The oral testimonies cover the nature of the work, the effectiveness of dust-control measures, and the mine culture and its place in the prevailing culture of the period. There is also a chapter on the worker’s perspective on disablement related to lung disease and coping strategies.

The book will appeal to those interested in the history of respiratory medicine, industrial relations, worker social history, and business history. Professionals involved in worker-protection and the promulgation of regulations and standards, both in develop-