

Book Reviews

- ✓ *Health Effects from Hazardous Waste Sites*, edited by J.B. Andelman and D.W. Underhill, Lewis Publishers, Chelsea, MI, 1987, ISBN 0-87371-046-0, 290 pp., US\$49.95.

This book contains 13 papers presented in 1983 at the Fourth Annual Symposium on Environmental Epidemiology held at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Environmental Epidemiology. It is unfortunate that it has taken over four years for this excellent material to get into print.

The book is divided into five sections:

- Scope of the problem
- Assessment of exposure
- Determining human health effects
- Defining health risks
- Case studies

The various papers cover, in some detail, human health risks and assessment, recent trends in monitoring hazardous waste sites, risks, limitations, methods of defining human exposure and a state-of-the-art review with recommendations for further research. Taken together (and evaluated by a non-medical reviewer), I think the book is excellent and very easily could have been retitled "Health Effects of Hazardous Chemicals" regardless of their source.

The book begins with a lengthy (80 pp.) chapter entitled: "Evaluating Health Effects of Exposure at Hazardous Waste Sites: A Review of the State-of-the-Art with Recommendations for Future Research". It is an excellent beginning.

The second chapter, which was supposed to be a risk perception actually deals with the history of waste disposal in general and non-hazardous waste in particular. It seems out of place.

Two chapters I read with real interest dealt with health studies at the Love Canal. Their divergent conclusions were intriguing, making me wish the authors had been asked to comment or peer review each other's paper. The disagreement is as follows:

In a paper entitled "Assessment of Health Risks at Love Canal" an author from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, in Atlanta, Georgia, concludes: "It can be said from current epidemiologic data available at Love Canal that *no* striking increase in illness occurrences have thus far appeared in association with living near the canal." In contrast, Paigen and Goldman of the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Oakland, California, in a paper resulting from an Environmental Defense Fund Study, "Lessons from the Love Canal: The Role of the Public and the Use of Birth Weight, Ground and Indigenous Wildlife and Evaluation of Health Risks", conclude that there was a problem: "...dif-

ferences at Love Canal (between exposed and non-exposed populations) *have* been demonstrated by three objective measures: indigenous wildlife, birth weight and stature.”

Ordinarily, I do not appreciate publication of verbal discussions at conferences; however, in this case, I'd like to see it. It might have solved what appears to be a totally conflicting opinion, at least to this reviewer.

Finally, I should note there are three appendices, the most useful of them being, I feel, an annotated bibliography of 17 published and unpublished studies or study protocols related to health evaluation at hazardous waste sites.

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Techniques for Hazardous Chemicals and Waste Spill Control, by L.A. Weaver, L.A. Weaver Co., 308 East Jones St., Raleigh, NC, 3rd ed., 1986, 200 pp. (approx.), US\$33.95.

This book appears to be the compiled notes from a course, and I'll venture it is a very good course. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the book, as the material is disjointed, often unconnected, and sometimes not complete. Moreover, the author has published the book using a personal computer with dot-matrix print, which is much less desirable than type-set or laser print.

There are, however, some commendable aspects and the book provides some good information:

- Spill prevention – one of the best discussions I have seen
- Laboratory spills
- Overview of regulating spill requirements contained in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- Spill response and cleanup
- Compressed gas spill release
- Contingency planning

The author, however, has not clearly delineated between spills of hazardous chemicals and spills of hazardous waste. Indeed, the first chapter of the book, to my surprise, dealt with the regulations governing spills of hazardous waste rather than hazardous chemicals to which most of the book is devoted. I would suggest that the author rewrites the book and produces a two-volume work, (possibly with some duplication) on:

- (i) Hazardous waste spill requirements, pretreatment and control,
- (ii) Hazardous chemicals spill prevention, contingency planning and spill cleanup.

Or he could write on spills of hazardous chemicals in general and discuss spills of hazardous waste as a special class of hazardous chemicals (which they are).

Finally, I'd suggest a much more comprehensive bibliography.

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