

Book review

***Organophosphates and health.* Lakshman Karalliedde, Stanley Feldman, John Henry and Timothy Marrs.** pp xxiv, 485, Imperial College Press, London, 2001.

It is a pleasure to see this book published by the Imperial College Press with Lakshman Karalliedde as the first editor. This is the second major book edited by him, the first being *Handbook of drug interactions* with Professor John Henry as co-editor and running into 935 pages, published by Arnold of London.

Organophosphates and health has 17 chapters, of which no less than 4 have been contributed by Karalliedde along with another in each chapter. These are entitled socio-economic health issues and pesticides, the acute cholinergic syndrome, management of organophosphorus compound poisoning and the global picture of organophosphate compound poisoning.

The book appears to be a continuation of the work he did in Sri Lanka with Professor Nimal Senanayake on organophosphates. In fact, the two of them jointly wrote a paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1987 on what they termed the intermediate syndrome. This name given by them has stuck to the syndrome worldwide, and this book contains a chapter on the intermediate syndrome written by Jan L de Bleecker. They had the distinction of seeing the leading article in the same issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* devoted to the subject described by them. This paper, as well as others written by them individually or combination, is referred to several times in the book by various authors of different chapters.

Besides Karalliedde the only other Sri Lankans to

figure as authors in this book are Professor Nimal Senanayake and Professor R Swaminathan. Swaminathan, along with Karalliedde are working at Guy's Kings St Thomas Hospital Trust and Medical Schools, London. Senanayake has written the chapter on organophosphorus-induced delayed polyneuropathy. When Karalliedde was working in Sri Lanka as Senior Lecturer in Anaesthesiology at the Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya, he and Senanayake worked together on organophosphates. They jointly won the President's Award given by NARESA (now National Science Foundation) mainly for their work on organophosphates. There is little doubt that this experience in organophosphates in Sri Lanka prompted Karalliedde to undertake the task of jointly editing this volume. It is available at Sri Lanka Medical Library

On leaving Sri Lanka about 10 years ago, Karalliedde worked at Guy's Hospital in London as Consultant and Senior Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Anaesthesiology. Now he has switched to toxicology at the same hospital where he holds posts of similar status.

A special feature of the book is that the editors have collected together international authorities from Belgium, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland (WHO), UK and USA. They have covered all clinical, environmental and socio-economic aspects of organophosphates. At a time when organophosphate poisoning has become so important as a cause of morbidity and mortality in many countries, this book presents a full picture of the subject in the global context.

C G Uragoda, Editor Emeritus, CMJ.

Child soldiers: understanding the context

In addition the severe restrictions imposed by the Tigers on civilians leaving areas controlled by them, particularly for younger children, create a feeling of entrapment as well as ensuring a continuing source of recruits. More recently, the Tigers have introduced compulsory military-type training in areas under their control, instilling military thinking. Everyone, beginning from the age of about 14, is compelled to undergo training in military drill, use of arms, and mock battles together with military tasks such as digging bunkers and manning sentry posts. Government rations, other benefits, and travel are allowed only to those who have been trained.

Daya Somasundaram, *BMJ* 2002; **324**: 1268-71.