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Book Review

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Book Review

Erratum

The citation for this review is 4 *RISK* 263 (1993) in most commercial databases.

DADE W. MOELLER, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. (Harvard University Press 1992). [332 pp.] Abbreviations, credits, index, preface. LC 91-20836; ISBN 0-674-25858-4. [\$39.95 cloth. 79 Garden Street; Cambridge MA 02138.]

This well-written and well-documented book has its origins in a survey course, "Principles of Environmental Health," which Professor Moeller has taught for more than 25 years at the Harvard School of Public Health. Accordingly, included in the fourteen chapters are chapters dealing with typical environmental health issues such as air, water, food, waste disposal, rodents and insects, the development of environmental standards, and environmental monitoring. However, perhaps the most attractive feature of Moeller's book is the inclusion of material that is atypical in a book of this type; for example, chapters dealing with occupational safety and workplace issues, injury control, energy, electromagnetic radiation, and disaster response.

The broad coverage of the book prompted me to review it to determine if it would be an appropriate text for a course I teach that deals with risk analysis and the management of environmental risk. While the text is not appropriate as the main text in a course of that nature, it is an excellent supplemental text for such a course. Furthermore, it is an easy-to-read general reference on issues of environmental health, particularly because of Moeller's detailed documentation. That is, rather than simply providing information, Moeller routinely documents sources, which is most helpful for those who wish to pursue specific issues in more detail.

The last chapter, "A Macroscopic View," is a jewel. It deals with global environmental issues including ozone depletion, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, deforestation, loss of topsoil, and destruction of the wetlands. This chapter provides an excellent general discussion of these important issues, and, in my opinion, the chapter should be the first chapter in the book, rather than the last. If placed first, it would provide a global perspective from which to view the more narrow environmental health topics covered in the other chapters. Because the chapter is so good, it is also perhaps the most disappointing. That is, the brevity of

treatment of the various issues is somewhat disappointing. Of course, the reader recognizes that this chapter is simply supplemental to the environmental health focus of the book. However, the excellent treatment of these global issues leaves the reader desiring a more comprehensive treatment.

Other particularly attractive features of the book include an extensive examination of electromagnetic radiation (the longest chapter in the book), and a discussion of disaster response. Environmental effects of electromagnetic radiation are the subject of increasing controversy, and the chapter devoted to this issue increases the value of the book as a reference source. Similarly, the disaster response chapter is a good reference source for those with an interest in this topic.

In summary, while Moeller's book provides a good treatment of the more typical environmental health issues, it also provides a broader coverage than is expected in a book of this type. Because of the level of documentation, the book is not only a good textbook, it is also a handy general reference source for the topics covered.

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