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Introduction to health physics.

Author(s) : [CEMBER, H.](#)

Book : [Introduction to health physics.](#) 1969 pp.xi + 422 pp.

Abstract : It is seldom possible to combine in one title for a subject the mere euphony and accuracy, and health physics is no exception. Health certainly involves more than the avoidance of radiation damage and physics surely has some things to make to other aspects of it. It is, however, rather late in the day to complain about a well-established name, so one must hope that the subject will expand to fit it. To exercise this particular hobby horse is not, however, to criticize this compact and well written textbook concerned with the limited applications of physics to the avoidance of the damaging effects of radiation. It assumes a knowledge of physics and mathematics probably up to that of the first or second year at a university.

principles of atomic and nuclear structure are dealt with in some detail and a useful feature for those of us whose knowledge is a little rusty on some points of the subject is dealt with *ab initio*, it would probably be rather difficult to follow without some previous knowledge of the subject. In some places too much detail is given which is scarcely necessary to devote nearly three pages to the derivation of the formula for kinetic energy which most of us are quite prepared to take on trust. After the first five chapters on fundamental physics one chapter is devoted to dosimetry and this is followed by one on the biological effects of radiation. This is a difficult subject for physicists to cope with and the reviewer feels that this chapter could profitably have been extended so that those without specialized biological knowledge could follow it more easily. Terms like "hemopoietic syndrome" and "ataxia" should have been defined in simple terms.

The chapter on radiation protection guides starts with the basic recommendations of the International Commission on Radiation Protection and gives some selected examples of the application of these to derive maximum permissible body burdens and so on. A detailed review is given of instruments used in radiation detection and measurement and of their limitations. The principles of external radiation protection are discussed with many examples given of their practical application. It is a pity that the graphs showing beam absorption of X and gamma radiation by various materials are not more readable.

The chapter on internal radiation protection deals with contamination of surfaces, the atmosphere and with waste disposal. Again, several detailed examples of calculations designed to assess the hazards involved in particular circumstances are taken up again in a later chapter on the evaluation of protection measures and also discusses medical surveillance, routine personnel monitoring and the control of radioactive activity. Some details of the methods available for the removal of surface contamination could profitably have been included.

One chapter is devoted to the conditions required for an uncontrolled chain reaction to start in a mass of fissionable material, a situation fraught with very serious consequences. This study of "criticality" is of course a specialized subject in the heading of reactor control, and is perhaps only of general interest to the health physicist.

In compiling a book of this kind, in what has now become so wide a field, a careful choice must be exercised, and what is emphasized, mentioned or regrettably omitted to some extent be a matter of personal opinion and interest. It is always easy to make this choice but, in general, this book provides a good general coverage of the subject and includes many references for further reading.

Of particular usefulness is the provision of a large number of "problems" set for the student, which are interesting, practical and within the scope of the material.

Anyone who has tried it knows how difficult is the combination of these three and how important if we are really to become doers of the word. *J. C. Jones.*

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Broader term(s) : Homo, Hominidae, primates, mammals, vertebrates, Chordata, eukaryotes

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