

The analysis of fundamental issues in cost-effectiveness/cost-benefit is followed by a discussion of the various avenues for deciding which medical programs to adopt. The next section addresses in more detail three selected topics related to cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis: discounting future costs and benefits, statistics, and modeling the long-term effects of programs. Finally, the book concludes with a concise summary of the book's content.

Because many of the chapters are written by economists, readers with a strong economic background will probably gain substantially more knowledge than those with a limited knowledge of economics. In some areas of the book I was admittedly walking on unfamiliar ground because of my lack of medical knowledge. Yet the book does a nice job of summarizing important points in straightforward language, and allows the interested reader to understand the fundamental issues faced by each of the major parties in the health care system (patients, payers, providers, and the public).

Valuing Health Care imparts an important piece of wisdom: we have an awful lot to learn about how to measure the true benefits of a medical procedure. This book is an excellent place to begin the process of learning about cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis.

BOOK REVIEWS

Causes of Death in the Workplace, by J. Paul Leigh (Quorum Books, 1995).

Reviewer: Steve Revenson, Richmond, Virginia

A very short and, if you are a devotee of old statistics, amusing book of 57 written pages drawing obvious conclusions, and an additional 271 laborious pages of admittedly outdated 1979 and 1986 statistics, studies, and customary text references.

The author, a recipient of federal research grants, attempts to make a case for the need of more federal funding of grants to further additional studies relating to workers' deaths and for additional federal laws mandating that workers be warned that employment may be hazardous to their health. Warnings would be on job applications, and the federal government would be required to send notices to individual workers. Obviously, the author is not a disciple of the terms "downsizing," "tax reduction," or "budget balancing."

Some data in the book are obscure or inaccurate. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not supply death rates for the occupation of "Womens Underwear," lawyers are most frequently murdered, and the "very hazardous occupation of Elephant Training" is not included in Supplemental Data System Statistics of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Leigh's description of ironworkers as people who work at "dizzying heights" appears at discrepancy with traditional government and insurance industry guides to occupational classifications, and his suggestion that this occupation's 27 deaths "implies falls" is one example of the

author's personal bias or lack of knowledge of the construction industry which deflects from rather than complements the statistical review. Data that postal clerks represent an occupation of zero deaths left me wondering about the veracity of frequent workplace shooting reports I've read in the newspapers.

Admittedly, the author states in his conclusions that "the first and perhaps most important conclusion pertains to [the public's] *common knowledge* about job hazards. Popular perceptions of dangerous jobs are often borne out in these data."

But most workers already know the hazards of their occupations; 250 pages of statistics aren't telling them anything they don't know. The TV, radio, and print media shout them out consistently. Posted OSHA 200/300 logs inform them on site. Foremen, supervisors, managers, safety personnel, loss control departments, union representatives, workers' compensation insurers, and a host of government agencies train and remind them daily.

People who are not students and therefore not required to spend a day's wage to purchase this book already understand the concept of risk and the law of large numbers and will continue working their way through life. Other sources of information on job-related accidents and disease can be found on the INTERNET:

American National Standards Institute, <http://www.ansi.org/home.html#catalog>

Center for Disease Control, <http://www.cdc.gov>

Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://stats.bls.gov/oshhome.htm>

OSHA, <http://www.osha.gov/index.html>

NIOSH, www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html.

BOOK REVIEWS

EBRI Databook on Employee Benefits by Employee Benefit Research Institute (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 1995).

Reviewer: David W. Sommer, University of Georgia

Employee benefits is a dynamic, rapidly evolving field. Anyone who has worked or taught in this area knows the challenges of staying current and keeping up with trends. Like previous editions, the third edition of the *EBRI Databook on Employee Benefits* is a valuable aid in coping with these challenges. The book provides a wealth of statistics on a very broad array of topics of interest to both benefits professionals and academics. It may not be often that one needs to know the percentage of employers with between 10 and 49 employees that provide prescription drug benefits through a mail order plan, but it is very nice to have a ready source for such specific information when the need arises.

The book begins with an overview of the employee benefit system, including a very brief history of employee benefits, a discussion of their importance in today's society and economy, and a review of major demographic trends that are likely to have a significant impact on the employee benefits system.

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