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BOOK REVIEW

BARTSCH, H., O'NEILL, I. K., CASTEGNARO, M., OKADA, M. (ed.): N-NITROSO COMPOUNDS: OCCURRENCE AND BIOLOGICAL EFFECTS. International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon 1980. No 41. 751 pp. US $ 55.—; SF 110.—.

In the early 1960s interest in N-nitroso compounds as environmentally significant carcinogens arose from a finding in Norway that mink fed herring meal preserved with sodium nitrite developed liver necrosis. Subsequently nitrosodimethylamine was detected in the herring meal and it was concluded that this compound formed by the reaction of nitrite with the precursor amine in the feed was the cause of liver damage in animals. The VIIth International Symposium on N-Nitroso Compounds held in Tokyo 1982, was intended to present comprehensive and authoritative reviews of new and significant developments in the area of hazard assessments and biochemistry of this broad class of environmental mutagens and carcinogens. The introductory session, prepared by a committee of leading experts presents an overview of the occurrence and biological effects. This was followed by papers dealing with chemistry and formation of N-nitroso compounds, *e.g.* formation of alkylonitrosoureas in the environment, on the nitrosation of barley malt alkaloids and on the N-nitrosamides of natural origin. Analytical methods for the determination of nitrosamines in foods and beverages such as HPLC, and mass spectrometry are described in papers presented in session 3. Further topics covered are occupational and general environmental exposure (sessions 4 and 5), the occurrence of N-nitroso compounds in body fluids (session 6) and their metabolism and pharmacokinetics (session 7). The concluding part of the proceedings presents papers on the mutagenicity and carcinogenecity of various N-nitroso compounds (session 8), including data on the mutagenecity of various foodstuffs treated with nitrite and on the effects of compounds that modify the genotoxic effects of N-nitroso compounds, such as ethyl alcohol, disulfirm, nirharman *etc.*

This book is certain to be an important guide to the vital area of genotoxic toxicology and biochemistry of N-nitroso compounds.

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