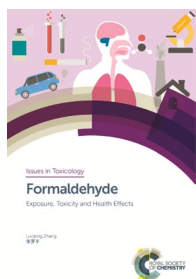


## Luoping Zhang: Formaldehyde. Toxicity and Health Effects

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**Bibliography**  
Formaldehyde. Toxicity and Health Effects  
Luoping Zhang  
Series: Issues in Toxicology  
Royal Society of Chemistry, Cambridge,  
UK, 2018, pp xxiv +389  
ISBN 987-178262-973-3  
GBP 149.00

This is the 37th volume in the RSC Issues in Toxicology series and since the series only commenced 13 years ago toxicology is clearly an important topic—I am tempted to say that the alchemists in the RSC has found how to change the toxic metal, lead, into gold! Unfortunately, from a purely personal point of view, the issue of lead compounds in petrol was decided long before the start of this series.

This book is unique in a number of ways. Firstly it is largely the work of a single author which is uncommon nowadays; two books recently reviewed in *Chromatographia* have more than twenty contributors. Twelve of the fifteen chapters are by Zhang and the remaining three are written in conjunction with her student. Although the book has a Chinese bias this is not important since the content is

universally relevant. It is difficult to imagine another book of this size about such a small molecule, with the exception of water, the most important molecule in the world. The book starts with an obligatory introduction and ends with “future directions”. In between there are thirteen chapters on topics ranging from Alzheimer’s disease to various forms of cancer.

Fortunately, formaldehyde in its various forms has a strong odour so that it gives warning of its presence as opposed to, for example, the insidious presence of carbon monoxide. Anyone who has been in the vicinity of a biology lab will have come across formaldehyde, but fortunately the axiom of Paracelsus applies and the poison is in the dose so that medical students are unlikely to have a problem, but histology technicians and nail technicians may suffer ill effects (see page 222).

Although this book is aimed specifically at toxicologists it is likely to have a much wider appeal, ranging from flat pack manufacturers to funeral directors! The book has several appendices, the first being a list of abbreviations and the second a glossary of medical terms. Both are of great utility and are followed by an excellent index.

Overall, this is an excellent book covering a wide range of subjects.

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