for the specialist. Readers not directly involved in recombination, however, might find chapters in standard genetic textbooks easier to read and understand.

KAY E DAVIES

Early Diagnosis of Fetal Defects

Current Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2. By D J H Brock. (Pp xi + 165; figures + tables. £7.95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1982.

The aim here was a moderate sized book for obstetricians covering laboratory based methods of antenatal diagnosis. Further volumes in the series are promised on physical methods such as ultrasound.

The book contains a great deal of information and answers many of the questions most frequently asked of clinical geneticists by obstetricians. The scientific background to clinical practice is emphasised throughout. Several topics are introduced by a brief historical survey. Important published data are quoted and critically discussed and the bibliography is extensive and runs up to 1981.

The author stresses in his introduction the importance of counselling in antenatal diagnosis and I liked his table showing the minimum 'agenda' of

such a counselling session. The question of fetal loss after amniocentesis is carefully reviewed.

The meat of the book consists of three chapters, on chromosome disorders, neural tube defects, and Mendelian disorders. There is up to date coverage of such topics as recombinant DNA techniques, fetal blood and tissue sampling, and first trimester trophoblast sampling. I should have liked a more extensive explanation of the use of linked polymorphisms, whether detected by DNA or by gene product analysis, in antenatal diagnosis. Many people find the underlying concepts difficult to grasp.

The last two chapters are on screening and future developments. This arrangement results in some topics being awkwardly split between chapters, but the detailed contents page is a help in looking things up quickly.

Apart from a few minor quibbles, such as the implication on page 42 that 49,XXXXY and 49,XXXXX people have the same phenotype as 47,XXY and 47,XXX respectively, everything in this book is sound and well thought out. I recommend it to any obstetrician or general practitioner who wishes to learn more about antenatal diagnosis.

N R DENNIS