impression is that Dr Young thoroughly enjoyed constructing this book and his pleasure is transmitted to the reader.

The book begins with four chapters on basic genetics, the most interesting and useful of which for readers who already have a background in the subject is a historical survey of advances in medical genetics over the past 30 years by McKusick. However, most of the content of this volume consists of 10 chapters focusing on particular psychiatric or neurological disorders. In the middle of these are two chapters on topics of considerable interest and relevance but where the amount of space allotted is hardly appropriate to the theme of ‘brain and behaviour’.

Mitochondrial genes get 20 pages and the whole of behavioural genetics is squeezed into just 16. Although individually most of the chapters are of high quality there is a fair amount of variation in the levels at which they are pitched. Presumably in an attempt to maintain equilibrium between technicality and the general readers’ needs, the editors have asked all authors to produce a brief glossary of genetic terms at the end of each chapter. Inevitably these definitions are terse, sometimes approximate, and very occasionally downright wrong.

In its favour this book does contain much useful information and conveys much of the excitement of new developments in a rapidly expanding field where difficult problems are becoming tractable because of the availability of new techniques. However, in attempting to cover recent advances and at the same time provide the elements of a basic introductory text, the editors have failed in their aim of producing ‘an essential resource for all neurologists, psychiatrists, and neuroscientists’.

PETER McGUGFFIN


This catalogue is a vital reference for all cytogeneticists and geneticists working in the field of oncology. The fourth edition comprises 14 141 cases collected from 3496 references. The dramatic increase in data since the publishing of the first volumes has required the information now to be published in two parts.

The major difference between this and the previous three editions is that data on unpublished cases have been excluded. This is because of the much larger amount of published information now available.

The overall format remains the same as the previous editions, providing karyotypes, morphological classification of the neoplastic condition, tumour site, and references. Most of the editors have reported cytogenetic aberrations are presented at the end of each section. The morphological diagnoses have been considerably expanded and are now presented in a more logical order which makes the retrieval of information on specific tumour types easier.

An overview of the information on the database is presented in relation to lists of journals from which the information was retrieved and the number of cases within the different disease entities. Precise details on how to use the Catalog are also given.

These volumes provide the cytogeneticist and geneticist with a rapid and easy tool to comprehensive review of publications for all previously reported chromosome abnormalities in cancer. They provide vital information on the pathophysiology of abnormalities in relation to disease type for use in both research and service laboratories.

CHRISTINE J HARRISON


The average clinical geneticist and even their molecular cousins may initially be slightly confused by some of the terminology in this book. For example, they will find that the present is not a distant relative of the available techniques.

The book promises much. It is edited by an eminent psychiatrist and a famous medical geneticist. Most of the contributors of the 16 chapters are well known for important contributions in their fields and the book is attractively produced. It is disappointing, therefore, that it does not live up to various expectations. The reason for this is probably because the editors have attempted a nearly impossible task for, as they say in the first sentence of their preface, their aim has been to produce a "course of instruction and a forum for presentation of recent findings". Attempting to sit upon both stools simultaneously was not done quite for all but those with the most impeccable sense of balance. Here there is more than an occasional wobble.

The chapter on Yeast Artificial Chromosomes by Philip Hieter and colleagues is...