I consider this an excellent successor to Dr Pratt's book. Inevitably it is larger in order to maintain the high standard of being a comprehensive source of reference. Because it presents a clear and logical account of a complex subject it is tremendously helpful. It is essentially a book for neurologists and for them I strongly recommend it.

SARAH BUNDEY

Orthopaedic Problems in Inherited Skeletal Disorders

By Frank Horan and Peter Beighton. (Pp 142; 98 figures. £20.00, DM 85.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1982.

This little book is well-produced with excellent illustrations. It is easy to read and (important) light to carry around.

The authors deal first in a very simple way with genetic principles; the second chapter describes in a general way the investigation and management of bone dysplasias, with one page allotted to antenatal diagnosis. Chromosomal disorders and polygenic inheritance with the common multifactorial disorders are not dealt with. Chapter three contains a full list of the international nomenclature, devised by the European Society of Pediatric Radiologists in Paris in 1969 and subsequently brought up to date. However, the classification adopted by the authors in discussing separate topics adopts the more usual and useful radiological divisions of predominantly disordered epiphyses, metaphyses, with or without vertebral involvement, decreased or increased bone density, etc.

This little book is best considered as a mini atlas and an introduction to the subject of skeletal dysplasias, rather than a technical guide to the postgraduate orthopaedic, plastic, or neuro-surgeon.

It is perhaps a little unrealistic to look for a volume containing the indications for and timing of surgical intervention with pre- and postoperative management in these rare and difficult disorders. It is only relatively recently that a few orthopaedic surgeons have turned their attention to this subject and there is as yet little material on which to base definitive decisions.

RUTH WYNNE-DAVIES

Clinical Genetics: Problems in Diagnosis and Counseling

Edited by A M Willey, T P Carter, S Kelly, and I H Porter. (Pp xi + 276; figures + tables.) New York, London: Academic Press. 1982.

This useful book reports the proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Birth Defects Symposium held in Albany in the autumn of 1981. The distinguished authors, all experts in their field, provide readable accounts of the current state of their art and this volume should prove valuable to anyone attempting to keep abreast of contemporary developments in the rapidly expanding world of medical genetics.

The book opens with an authoritative discussion of the vitamin supplementation studies on the prevention of neural tube defects, followed by a clear and concise overview of the 'new genetics' and its application in the antenatal diagnosis of the haemoglobinopathies. There are three papers with a biochemical flavour dealing with the difficult issues of duration of therapy in phenylketonuria (unresolved) and its management in pregnancy (which should commence before conception), plus the technical aspects of lysosomal enzyme assay and complementation studies with special reference to propionicacidaemia.

There then follow four papers of cytogenetic interest. The first indicates that the risk of 'severe anomaly' in a fetus with an apparently balanced *de novo* structural rearrangement is unlikely to be great (three out of 41) and may not differ significantly from that for the general population. The need for more data is freely admitted. There is a helpful review of mosaicism and pseudomosaicism in antenatal cytogenetic diagnosis although the problem of trisomy 20 mosaicism remains. A study of 'who gets amniocentesis' is well worth reading, as is an excellent discussion of recurrence risks in Down's syndrome, which offers useful guidance on how to cater for paternal age, previous non-disjunction, and parental remarriage.

Chapters of general interest include a comprehensive account of the overgrowth syndromes, a review of empirical risk data in psychiatric disorders, and a brief but fascinating glimpse into the mind of Francis Galton, whose interests ranged from spectacles for divers to the statistical inefficacy of prayer (those who were prayed for most, such as royalty, tended to die youngest). It is a mixed comfort to note that Dr Opitz estimates that he can identify a cause and recurrence risk in only 20% of cases with an unknown syndrome. What hope is there for the rest of us lesser mortals? More depressing are the papers on cystic fibrosis, which reveal that despite considerable progress, reliable antenatal diagnosis is still some way off.

In presenting the proceedings of any symposium the editors and publishers face a difficult task in maintaining literary and technical quality without sacrificing speed of production. In this volume they have largely succeeded. The text is of a high standard,