

studies of population differentiation. In the chapters that follow, the author displays, continent by continent, a wealth of knowledge on the ethnology and archaeology of the peoples concerned, to show how the genetic data either confirm (usually) or conflict with (rarely) usual anthropological interpretations of relationship. He seeks for explanations of both in terms of the processes of gene frequency change, and it is interesting to see the number of times that the ABO gene frequencies are suggested to be rather labile. Here are to be found mention of the many curious paradoxes of gene frequency distribution—the relationship of Siberia to the Americas, of the Jewish populations to their neighbours, of the Ainu to other peoples in East Asia—and the idiosyncrasies of gene frequency to be found in the Icelanders, the Greeks, and many others.

All populations are characterised by their gene frequency arrays, which in the short term change very little and can be used to identify migrant groups, but which in the long term come to differ in populations which undoubtedly have a common origin but have long been separated. The final chapter illustrates from what has preceded it each of the processes of gene frequency change. As a result, the explanation of the present day gene frequency distribution in populations throughout the world is a little nearer. What are not yet available are quantitative assessments of the rates of change that they have brought about.

There is so much here of interest to those concerned with mankind. What the book does not bring out is that the author himself was the inspiration, or the instigator, of many surveys which have made this synthesis possible, or was responsible with the indefatigable Elizabeth Ikin and other colleagues for the very tests themselves. Written at a simple level and obviously intended for a lay or elementary student readership, this book may be enthusiastically recommended for those who are working in anthropology, or who are professionally interested in genetic distribution patterns, whether they be epidemiologists or biogeographers. What a pity that the publishers faulted an otherwise excellent and well produced little book by failing to complete the cross-referenced pages at proof stage!

D F ROBERTS

#### Research Ethics

*Progress in Clinical and Biological Research*. Volume 128. Edited by K. Berg and K. E. Tranøy. (Pp xvii + 413; figures + tables. £52.00.) New York: Alan R. Liss. 1983.

The study of medical ethics and the production of medical texts would seem to be thriving growth industries, so perhaps it is not surprising that these

interests should be combined in this the 128th volume of the *Progress in Clinical and Biological Research* series. This book presents the papers delivered at a symposium, held in Oslo and funded in part by the Norwegian government, devoted to 'research ethics' a subject appropriately defined as the "consideration of moral problems arising in connection with the conduct and consequences of scientific research".

The authors represent a very broad spectrum of medical and scientific expertise and manage to present a balanced and comprehensive overview of a wide variety of subjects, ranging from the roles of the legal system and government to animal husbandry and military research. Other topics covered include fraud (poor Mendel is in the dock once more), ethical committees, informed consent, and public access to research data. Given this very broad remit, it is surprising that so little attention is paid to the particularly difficult subject of medical research in children.

The interests of the fetus are however given paramount attention and the papers on biomedical research will be of particular interest to medical geneticists. Professor Kåre Berg's valuable contribution provides a useful riposte to the fundamentalist as he reminds the reader that there is no genetic technology available which will influence human intelligence or behaviour, that the medical geneticist is not concerned with attempts to influence the structure of populations, that the availability of antenatal diagnosis causes couples at risk to have more children than would otherwise be the case, and that the outcome of antenatal diagnosis is unlikely ever to account for as much as 1% of the induced abortions in countries with liberal abortion laws.

It has to be said that full understanding of many of the contributions demands a clear mind, a concise dictionary, and a cool determination, for they are strong on conceptual discussion and philosophical jargon which is not always readily grasped. Certainly this is not a book to be read while one's children are bored. Technically the book is well produced with a useful reference section, and presumably the absence of six pages in the review copy represents an isolated printer's error rather than editorial censure. Clearly it is vital that those engaged in scientific and medical research should have, and be seen to have, a conscience, and anyone who believes otherwise would do well to read this book. However, for the busy medical geneticist this is not a priority purchase. Many of the chapters are heavy going and of little or no obvious relevance to clinical genetics, so that this book cannot be strongly recommended for either personal or library purchase.

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