system and the use of an artificially created granuloma pouch (by the subcutaneous injection of sterile air) in the rat. Two further chapters describe the detection of mutagens in cooked food and in faeces.

The volume will provide interesting reading to those specialists working in the field of genetic toxicology. The general reader should, however, be aware that a considerable background knowledge of the field is necessary before it can be appreciated in full. It is likely that most readers will confine themselves to specific chapters which cover areas which overlap their own interests, for example, the chapter by H F Mower on 'Mutagens in human faeces' may be of interest to workers in the area of cancer of the colon. Similarly, the chapters describing new bacterial strains will be of interest to researchers looking for suitable systems for the investigation of specific chemicals.

All chapters in the book are clearly and concisely written, comprehensively referenced, and maintain the high standard achieved by previous volumes of the series. Personally, I would have liked to have seen a little more conformity in the style of presentation between the individual chapters, but the variation does not detract from the value of the whole. This volume, as with all the others in the series, has an essential place on any library shelf of a laboratory investigating the role of environmental chemicals in the production of inherited defects and cancer formation.

J M PARRY

Human Prenatal Diagnosis

Edited by Karen Filkins and Joseph F Russo. (Pp 418; figures + tables. \$75.00.) New York, Basel: Marcel Dekker. 1985.

This volume, number 18 in the Clinical and Biochemical Analysis series, presents a comprehensive and balanced overview of the state of the art of prenatal diagnosis as it exists at present. The publishers, editors, and authors are to be congratulated on producing a very readable account of topical developments in such a rapidly expanding field.

The contributors, based almost entirely in North America, have produced 15 chapters covering all aspects of prenatal diagnosis. Several contributions are particularly meritorious. The review of amniocentesis for cytogenetic studies provides much useful data for those involved in busy pre-amniocentesis counselling clinics. There is also a particularly valuable compendium of metabolic disorders diagnosable in utero, supported by almost 400 references. Fetoscopy and chorion biopsy are

well covered with ample discussion of risks and limitations. The vexed questions posed by multiple pregnancy and possible fetal therapy are discussed in detail and the addendum on DNA technology is a model of clarity.

There are, however, a few disappointments. The section on fetoscopy includes a list of dysmorphic syndromes with numerous spelling mistakes, and since fetoscopy plays a very valuable role in the prenatal diagnosis of Mendelian dysmorphic syndromes, it is unfortunate that this subject is not covered in greater depth. A discussion of the apparent association of low serum alphafetoprotein with Down syndrome pregnancies would not go amiss. Finally, although ultrasonography is well reviewed and lavishly illustrated, the second trimester diagnosis of cardiac, cerebral, and limb abnormalities receives only scant attention.

These are relatively minor criticisms of a generally excellent book. The text is clearly presented and well indexed. This volume will be of interest to everyone involved in the complex area of prenatal diagnosis and can be strongly recommended.

I D YOUNG

Family Studies in Genetic Disorders

By A J Krush and K A Evans. (Pp 242; figures + tables.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas. 1984.

This book, written by two very experienced social workers in the field of medical genetics research, is essentially a practical guide to organising and carrying out family studies. The authors define studies of two types: those in which ascertainment of probands must be unselected and consecutive in order to determine the previously unknown mode of inheritance and risk of recurrence; and those in which a non-random group of families with a condition of known inheritance are studied to delineate further clinical and biochemical aspects of the disorder. Although not specifically referred to, molecular genetic linkage studies could be included in this group. The book is clearly divided into sections which consider, for the two types of study, the indications for an investigation, ascertainment, approach to probands and relatives, interviews, long term contact with families, and data recording. Data analysis is only briefly covered. The reference list is extensive and particularly strong on the psychosocial aspects of genetic counselling (with a few surprising exclusions).

The step by step advice will be invaluable to research assistants embarking on a genetic family