**Book reviews**

*Journal of Medical Genetics* 1989, **26**, 72

**Catalog of Chromosome Aberrations in Cancer**

This further update of a very useful compendium has a number of new features. Basically it is a simple list of the chromosome aberrations found in individual cases of specific neoplasms. The 9069 cases are grouped primarily by chromosome number but within each chromosome section cases are also grouped by the disease entity. There is no descriptive text but the list of over 2000 references is valuable as a bibliography of the entire field. New features include a catalogue of double minutes, homogeneously staining regions, and 'molecular investigations'; the latter is only a beginning but could develop into a useful section with a bit more work. Another new feature is that the chromosome of interest is in bold type; this makes for much easier analysis of the enormous mass of information. A shortcoming of previous editions has been the difficulty of getting out information on specific disease entities. This has now been put right and the new disease classification is very helpful.

This is a reference work which will be of value largely to practising cytogeneticists, though molecular geneticists and others will find it a most useful source book. Clearly it is not bed time reading, but the lay out is clear and the amount of information is prodigious. Anyone involved in cancer genetics, whether in research or diagnostic work, should have a copy of this in the laboratory.

D G Harnden

**Cancer Cytogenetics**

In the 1980s rapid advances have been made in the study of cancer cytogenetics and there has long been the need for a book which details our expanding knowledge of the field. For this reason *Cancer Cytogenetics* is a most timely and welcome publication. The authors have reviewed the mass of data made available during this period and managed to produce a compact, yet comprehensive, book that is well written and clearly presented.

The book is divided into three parts. The first three chapters give a general introduction to the study of chromosomes in oncology. The second part, covering chromosome abnormalities in specific disorders, chapters 4 to 10 dealing with the haematological conditions and chapter 11 concentrating on solid tumours. In part three, the final two chapters discuss the role of oncogenes and antioncogenes in the neoplastic process.

The value of the book to workers in the field of cancer cytogenetics lies in the second part. Each chapter in this section follows a similar well laid out format. Initially, there is a brief clinical picture of the disorder, which will be of value to non-specialists. This is followed by a general overview of the cytogenetic findings, and then a more detailed study of specific chromosomal abnormalities, including involvement at the molecular level where known or postulated. The correlation between the cytogenetics and the clinical picture is covered next, and provides a useful guide for the interpretation of results. There then follows a brief summary of the chapter and a list of up to date references.

The content and quality of this book are of a very high standard and areas that are particularly strong include the clinical importance of cytogenetic findings (which should be invaluable to both cytogeneticists and haematologists) and the molecular biology of chromosomal rearrangements. I have only a couple of minor criticisms: there is an apparent mistake in the karyotype on page 12, and I would have liked to have seen a photograph of all of the specific cytogenetic rearrangements. This excellent book, which has already been widely used in our department, should be an essential purchase for the library of any person or laboratory involved in cancer cytogenetics, and the clarity of the text makes it an easily understandable guide for anyone with a passing interest in the subject.

Peter W Thompson