BOOK REVIEWS

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Genatlas. J Frézal, M-S Baule, T D Fougère. (Pp 1012.) Paris: John Libbey. 1991.

This book represents the fruit of many years work by Jean Frézal and his colleagues in assembling data on gene mapping. This second edition is produced in a much more attractive format than the first and contains a number of new tables, as well as being as up to date as anything can be in this rapidly moving field.

Inevitably the question arises whether a book such as this, based on a data collection system separate to that used by the Human Gene Mapping volumes and McKusick's *MIM*, fills a useful role. My conclusion, at least as far as the book is concerned, is that it does, and it is worth stressing why.

First, the HGM reports are extraordinarily unhelpful to the clinician or clinical geneticist, who has to decipher genetic disorders hidden among a forest of genes and markers, where even the disease name is dropped as soon as a gene product is available. It was in attempting to compile the clinical disorders report from this material two years ago that I became fully aware how inadequate these volumes were for anyone clinically orientated, and how useful the corresponding tables in *Genatlas* were by contrast. The tables in *MIM*, while useful, are not so complete from the mapping viewpoint, though the merging of the on line *MIM* and HGM databases has to some extent solved this problem.

Genatlas, unlike the HGM reports, has been conceived and produced by someone primarily interested in diseases. This is reflected in the way its tables are organised, including functionally related lists of antigens, hormones, and receptors, as well as a very detailed list of mapped genetic disorders, with extensive, often clinically relevant, references. Individual chromosomes are also dealt with fully, though I missed the visual companionship of actual chromosome maps that is such a feature of *MIM*.

Whether the database underlying *Genatlas* will be able to handle the ever increasing

detail of the human genome remains to be seen. Meanwhile, Jean Frézal and his co-workers deserve the thanks of all those in the gene mapping field whose interests are mainly disease related, who should find it a useful source of both mapping information and references.

PETER S HARPER

Chromosome Anomalies and Prenatal Development: An Atlas. Oxford Monographs on Medical Genetics No 21. D Warburton, J Byrne, N Canki. (Pp 104; £65.00.) Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1991.

A good monograph should have as its basis long and extensive experience and painstaking study. This monograph is one of the best, based on a 12 year study in New York city of over 5000 spontaneous abortion specimens.

Although called an atlas (and only 100 pages long) there is great breadth and depth of subject matter as well as excellent illustrations. The first chapter describes the study and in the process provides a model for cytogenetic and morphological examination of spontaneous abortions. There are useful definitions of the various developmental types of abortion and descriptions and illustrations of the morphology of villi and their correlation with various karyotypic abnormalities. The subsequent chapters concern specific chromosome abnormalities or chromosome groups. They are all based on studies of large numbers and describe the range of manifestations from the appearance of villi to embryos arrested early in development to late second trimester fetuses.

The illustrations throughout are wonderful, mostly in colour and printed on good quality, slightly matt paper, which I imagine is the publisher's equivalent of non-reflective glass.

I can think of no criticisms, constructive or otherwise, and the only major omission is of an aspect of the subject whose importance was not recognised at the time of the study, that of mosaicism. While mosaic states are referred to in the various chapters, the recent work of Kalousek and others has shown that a dedicated chapter would be justified in a future edition.

This atlas strikes just the correct balance of text and illustrations. I would highly recommend it to embryologists, gynaecological and paediatric pathologists, cytogeneticists, and clinical geneticists involved in fetal dysmorphology; all could learn from, and make good use of, the wealth of experience recorded and illustrated here.

DIAN DONNAI

NOTICES

Health Professions in 1992: The European Challenge

This one day conference will be held on Tuesday 28 April 1992 at the Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ. The fee is £75.00 (reduced fee available to members of the Royal Society of Health). For further information contact: Conference Department, The Royal Society of Health, 38A St George's Drive, London SW1V 4BH. Tel: 071-630 0121. Fax: 071-976 6847.

3rd International Workshop on Carcinoma in situ and Cancer of the Testis

This workshop will be held on 1-4 November 1992 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The scientific programme will include the following topics. (1) Pathogenesis and cytogenetics of germ cell cancer. (2) Hormones and growth factors in testicular neoplasia. (3) Carcinoma in situ: screening and management. (4) Identification and treatment of high risk groups. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 May 1992. For further information please contact: Workshop Secretariat, C/o Professor Niels E Skakkebaek, University Department of Growth and Reproduction, Section 5064, Rigshospitalet, 9 Blegdamsvej, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark. Tel: +45 3545 5085. Fax: +45 3139 9054.

24th Annual March of Dimes Clinical Genetics Conference: Clinical and Molecular Cytogenetics of Developmental Disorders

This conference will be held on 12 to 15 July 1992 at Stanford University, Stanford, California. The conference will provide an overview of cytogenetics including topics such as microdeletion syndromes, new chromosomal syndromes, prenatal screening, genomic imprinting, in situ hybridisation, and new treatment modalities. The programme includes plenary sessions, optional primer session, ethics and counseling panel, and diagnostic session. Abstracts are due by 15 April 1992. For informational brochure, contact Professional Services Department, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. Tel: (914) 438-7100.