subtitled 'Promises kept and pending'. The promises kept are mainly so far on the technical side and are truly impressive. Clinical applications come more into the pending category.

Probably the chapter with the greatest long term significance is that on fluorescence in situ hybridisation (FISH) (Jeanne Lawrence). It starts with a lot of technical information optimising the conditions for efficient signal detection. Numerous technical parameters are fairly easy to test with fluorescence detection but in fact, for the most part, the studies end up confirming the knowledge acquired in the days when radioactive probes were used. The best examples given in this chapter concern hybridisation of probes to interphase nuclei. One beautiful example concerns probes from different regions of the dystrophin gene. Two probes just over a Megabase apart are shown as two distinct clearly spaced dots in the nucleus of a male. The corresponding hybridisation to nuclei from a female shows two such pairs of dots. The corresponding experiment using probes only 375 kb apart shows a closer spaced pair of dots in the male and two pairs in the female. These examples must surely point the way to solving the perennial problem of carrier diagnosis in the female relatives of boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy associated with deletions of the dystrophin gene. Many other potential applications will arise as this technology becomes more widespread.

Each chapter opens with a clear introduction and a list of major points to be covered, but many of the gems are well hidden in the chapters.

S MALCOLM

Hereditary Tumors. Ed M L Brandi, R White. (Pp 230; \$82.50.) New York: Raven Press. 1991.

This book is the proceedings of a conference on hereditary tumours held in Florence, Italy on 22 to 24 April 1991. The book is notable for the speed of publication and the number of distinguished contributors. It therefore provides an up to date and authoritative account of a number of aspects of this important subject. Although the range of topics covered is wide (including articles on molecular genetics, genomic imprinting, and clinical aspects), it is not comprehensive. The multiple endocrine neoplasia syndromes are covered in most detail (five contributions) but there are contributions on the molecular genetics of neurofibromatosis type 1, Beck-

Wiedemann syndrome, familial melanoma, lung cancer, genomic imprinting, and tumour suppressor genes (general aspects and specific articles on Wilms's tumour, retinoblastoma, and p53 genes).

Although most of the material contained in this book can be found separately in recent review articles, this book presents a convenient collection of up to date articles on selected aspects of hereditary tumours. One price of rapid publication using camera ready manuscripts is a lack of conformity in the presentation of individual articles.

EAMONN MAHER

DNA Fingerprinting: Approaches and Applications. Ed T Burke, G Dolf, A J Jeffreys, R Wolff. (Pp 400; SFr 168.) Berlin: Birkhauser. 1991.

This book is a collection of papers presented at the First International Symposium on DNA Fingerprinting held in October 1990. It contains a wealth both of technical information and fascinating reading, detailing a wide range of applications ranging from parasitology to population genetics and with comprehensive reference lists. Who would have thought that sequences useful for disentangling family relationships in humans would be closely related to sequences which can perform the same function in rice plants? Another chapter which caught my interest was a contribution to the problem of altruism in animals – the demonstration that bee eaters who help at the nest of other birds invariably help their relatives but do not in general contribute by paternity to the offspring.

Is this book useful to those whose main interest is in medical genetics? On the whole the emphasis is on true fingerprinting, that is, the generation of complex highly individual patterns which are the product of multiple loci. The human applications of these are in forensics and law rather than medicine. The establishment of true biological relationships between individuals is often of importance in genetic counselling but probably most laboratories would find it easier to use a series of locus specific probes rather than a core probe. The finding of an additional band in the fingerprint of one of a pair of monozygotic twins with Proteus syndrome is interesting but does not advance understanding of the condition. On the whole it reinforces the depressing conclusion previously reached that although a pair of MZ twins, one of whom has a clearly inherited disease, should be a valuable resource it

is very hard to think of anything useful to do with them.

If you are an aficionado of DNA fingerprinting or if you dabble in forensic problems or in extracting results from minute and degraded samples then this is definitely the book for you. However, if you would really prefer a locus specific probe or a dinucleotide repeat to solve your problem, perhaps you should just persuade your library to buy a copy.

S POVEY

NOTICES

Latin American Directory of Research Centres in Human Genome. R Cruz Coke. 1991

Copies of this directory are available from the Department of Biochemistry, University of Chile School of Medicine, Independencia 1027, Casilla 70086, Santiago, Chile 7. Fax: 56-2-376320.

Standing Committee on Human Cytogenetic Nomenclature 1991-96

Elections for the Standing Committee on Human Cytogenetic Nomenclature were held at the 8th International Congress of Human Genetics in Washington, DC, on 10 October 1991. The following members were elected for the period 1991-96: Felix Mitelman, Sweden (Chairman), Jose Carlos Cabral de Almeida, Brazil, H John Evans, UK, Patricia N Howard-Peebles, USA, John M Opitz, USA, Avirachan T Tharapel, USA, Walther Vogel, Germany. Issues regarding human cytogenetic nomenclature can be addressed to any member of the committee.