in families with IP may, however, be fruitful in the search for the gene.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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The A-Z Reference Book of Syndromes and Inherited Disorders. 2nd ed. Patricia 
Gilbert. (Pp 378; £15.99 pb.) London: Chap-

The diagnosis of a rare condition in a child understandably raises many questions for that 
child’s parents and relatives. Such queries are usually posed to the paediatrician or GP 
caring for the child. However, there are a wide range of health professionals involved 
in the care of the child who need information about a condition, both for themselves, 
and to answer the questions inevitably also posed to the child. Of course, customers should add 15% for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a UK bank or by credit card (Mastercard, Visa, or American Express) stating card number, name, date, and full name. (The price and availability are occasionally subject to revision by the Publishers.)

The Molecular Biology and Pathology of Elastic Tissues. Ciba Foundation Sym-
posium 199. (Pp 361; £49.95.) London: Wil

This book contains the published proceedings of an excellent Ciba Symposium on the 
molecular biology and pathology of elastic tissues held in Kenya in 1994. As one expects of 
Ciba Symposium proceedings, the book is beautifully produced and very portable. Fur-
thermore, it has been published within less than 12 months. That American dominance in the field is very evident with 72% of the chapters and a 

People who advise pregnant women need to keep up with developments in genetics. 
Parents always want to know the risks of passing a condition to their children and 
whether anything can be done to reduce these. Often the first person they ask is their ob-
stetrician or midwife. This book, edited by a distinguished team from the United States 
and Israel, aims to provide the information required. It has some good features but these 
are outweighed by many faults.

The book opens with six chapters on gen-
eral aspects of genetic diseases, including 
specifically preconception counselling, chro-
mosomal problems, and infant retardation.

These deal with problems in a similar way to most textbooks of genetics, albeit very 
briefly and with some important omissions. The book then changes character, and in the 
remaining 12 chapters a range of authors 
each tackle the genetic aspects of a specific 
multifactorial pregnancy problem, including 
the main medical problems that occur in preg-
nancy, renal, cardiac, haematological, neuro-
logical, and psychiatric disease, etc. This is 
a useful idea since, for generalists caring for 
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ditions are much more common than the single 
gene defects on which most traditional 
genetic texts concentrate, and some chapters 
are very successful. However, for some dis-
ces, once it has been stated that the in-
heritance is multifactorial, and the empirical 
reurrence risk given, there is little more to 
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tributors from padding out their chapters with 
platitudes, irrelevancies, and repetitions, and 
the whole book cries out for stronger editing. 
The arrangement also leads to oddities. For 
example, cystic fibrosis (CF) appears only in 
chapters on anaesthesia and gastrointestinal 
function. The reason for this is unknown, but 
to be that having written about malignant 
hyperpyrexia and succinylcholine sensitivity, 
the author needed a couple more pages to 
make a full chapter. The description of CF 
and the statement that it is the most common 
almost entirely with the important but rare 
problem of pregnancy in an affected woman. 
It is a quite inadequate guide to the day to 
day problems surrounding CF counselling 
and prenatal diagnosis for normal women with 
or without a family history.

There are many other omissions and im-
balances. Some are serious and others simply 
rather strange. For example, myotonic dys-
trophy gets only five lines in one of the in-
trductory chapters while multiple sclerosis 
gets 10 pages later on. It is unacceptable for 
a large genetics text in 1996 to omit any 
mention of pre-eclampsia or see a page descrip-
tion of any mention of the fa-
miliar pattern of this disease. Readers will not 
learn that many experts even believe, albeit 
wrongly in my view, that this fascinating and 
common condition might be inherited in 
simple mendelian fashion, and that a number 
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studies. They should be told.

This book bears all the hallmarks of being 
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J G THORNTON

The diagnosis of a rare condition in a child understandably raises many questions for that child’s parents and relatives. Such queries are usually posed to the paediatrician or GP caring for the child. However, there are a wide range of health professionals involved in the care of the child who need information about a condition, both for themselves, and to answer the questions inevitably also posed to the child. Of course, customers should add 15% for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a UK bank or by credit card (Mastercard, Visa, or American Express) stating card number, name, date, and full name. (The price and availability are occasionally subject to revision by the Publishers.)

Maternal Genetic Disease. Edited by N B 
Iida, A Dragoo, M P Johnson, M I Evans. 
(Pp 272; £65.95.) Stamford, Connecticut: 
Appleton and Lange. 1994. ISBN 0-8835-
1646-0.

People who advise pregnant women need to keep up with developments in genetics. Parents always want to know the risks of passing a condition to their children and whether anything can be done to reduce these. Often the first person they ask is their obstetrician or midwife. This book, edited by a distinguished team from the United States and Israel, aims to provide the information required. It has some good features but these are outweighed by many faults.

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These deal with problems in a similar way to most textbooks of genetics, albeit very briefly and with some important omissions. The book then changes character, and in the remaining 12 chapters a range of authors each tackle the genetic aspects of a specific multifactorial pregnancy problem, including the main medical problems that occur in pregnancy, renal, cardiac, haematological, neurological, and psychiatric disease, etc. This is a useful idea since, for generalists caring for pregnant women, these multifactorial conditions are much more common than the single-gene defects on which most traditional genetic texts concentrate, and some chapters are very successful. However, for some conditions, once it has been stated that the inheritance is multifactorial, and the empirical recurrence risk given, there is little more to say. Unfortunately, this has not deterred contributors from padding out their chapters with platitudes, irrelevancies, and repetitions, and the whole book cries out for stronger editing. The arrangement also leads to oddities. For example, cystic fibrosis (CF) appears only in chapters on anaesthesia and gastrointestinal function. The reason for this is unknown, but to be that having written about malignant hyperpyrexia and succinylcholine sensitivity, the author needed a couple more pages to make a full chapter. The description of CF and the statement that it is the most common almost entirely with the important but rare problem of pregnancy in an affected woman. It is a quite inadequate guide to the day to day problems surrounding CF counselling and prenatal diagnosis for normal women with or without a family history.

There are many other omissions and imbalances. Some are serious and others simply rather strange. For example, myotonic dystrophy gets only five lines in one of the introductory chapters while multiple sclerosis gets 10 pages later on. It is unacceptable for a large genetics text in 1996 to omit any mention of pre-eclampsia or see a page description of pre-eclampsia of any mention of the familial pattern of this disease. Readers will not learn that many experts even believe, albeit wrongly in my view, that this fascinating and common condition might be inherited in simple mendelian fashion, and that a number of groups are already doing gene linkage studies. They should be told.

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