This letter was written to Dr Sabry et al, who reply as follows.

We read the comments of Dr van Steensel concerning our report of unusual traits associated with Robinow syndrome. In family 1 of our report, we described a female patient with many of the constant traits of Robinow syndrome, who showed other unusual traits in addition. We also observed variable expression of some of the traits of Robinow syndrome in healthy sibs/cousins of the proband in this consanguineous family. Like many syndromes for which no molecular/biochemical/cytogenetic markers have been identified, the Robinow syndrome remains solely dependent on the clinical phenotype of the patients. Naturally, this gives wide scope for different subjective views to argue for or against a given diagnosis. This is particularly true for Robinow syndrome, with its wide spectrum of inter/intragenotypic heterogeneity that would be expected to reflect a corresponding degree of molecular variability. Of course, the profile in the proband of family 1 does not show a straightforward Robinow phenotype, or it would have been of little interest to the genetics community. Although we bear in mind the possibility of a new Robinow-like malformation syndrome in family 1 of the report, we are reluctant to designate it a new syndrome until all available possibilities are exhausted. Incidentally, we have recently received a letter from Dr H G Brunner from the Department of Genetics, University Hospital, Nijmegen, expressing interest in our Robinow syndrome cases and requesting our collaboration in their ongoing molecular study to map and clone the gene(s) responsible, which we are now considering.

M A SABRY  E A R ISMAIL  N AL-TORKI  S FARAH
Kuwait Medical Genetics Centre, Farwania and IbnSina Hospitals, Kuwait

BOOK REVIEW

If you wish to order or require further information regarding the titles reviewed here, please write to or telephone the BMJ Bookshop, PO Box 295, London WC1H 9JR. Tel 0171 383 6244. Fax 0171 383 6602. Books are supplied post free in the UK and for BFPO addresses. Overseas 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, expiry date, and full name. (The price and availability are occasionally subject to revision by the Publishers.)


This book reviews the genetic changes observed in solid tumours with particular emphasis on the practical issues of diagnosis, prognosis, and monitoring therapy. The book provides comprehensive coverage of the impact of the new genetic technology in furthering the understanding of the mechanisms underlying tumour development. The opening chapter illustrates the increasing relevance of genetic markers in tumour diagnosis and prognosis, and provides an introduction to the subject. Part 1 of the book, consisting of several chapters, covers the introduction to the application of the major techniques, including flow cytometry, in situ hybridisation, FISH, and nucleic acid amplification. The relevance and applications of these techniques are well described. Part 2 of the book comprises comprehensive reviews of the current knowledge of the cytogenetic and molecular genetic changes, this book provides specific tumour types/subtypes. Each of these chapters is contributed by acknowledged experts in the field.

There is, almost inevitably, some variability in the apparent quality of the reviews and as advances in this field are taking place continually a book of this nature is always going to be a little behind hand. With the exception of an excellent chapter on the morphological, antibody, and chromosomal classification of haematological malignancies, this book does not cover leukemias and lymphomas. One chapter at the very end of the book describes the use of cytogenetics, with emphasis on microdissection, which would perhaps have been better placed earlier in the volume along with the other methodologies. Although the colour plates are replicated as black and white photographs within the chapters, their placement within the centre of the book is disappointing. This necessitates frequent page turning, as the colour is fundamental to the illustration in some instances! However, the book provides an excellent background information and an overview from which it would be possible to delve deeper using the cited references, although a quick scan for the new publications would also be wise in some instances.

A certain level of knowledge of solid tumours, cytogenetics, and molecular biology is assumed. This should be a useful book for the interested pathologist and clinician as well as students in these areas. Those in research will find the book an easy introduction to a topic and useful in the process of formulating ideas and methodological approaches before embarking on conducting their own investigations. Selected areas of cancer cytogenetics represented in this book are also areas of expanding interest for cytogeneticists and genetic technologists who, working in league with pathologists, may ultimately be able to provide more information of practical use for patients.

LEONIL WILLATT
JANET SHIPLEY

NOTICE

Call for patients with familial pancreatic disease: the EUROPAC Register

We are establishing a European register (EUROPAC) of families with hereditary pancreatic, familial pancreatic cancer, and pancreatic cancer, that has occurred as part of a familial cancer syndrome. This colabo-