An Epidemiological Survey of Skin Diseases, Tattooing, and Rheumatic Diseases as Exemplified Initially by the Prevalence of Psoriasis and Tattooing. By Lars Hellgren. (Pp. 108; 1 figure + tables. Sw. kr. 32.) Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksells. 1967.

Psoriasis. The Prevalence in Sex, Age and Occupational Groups in Total Populations in Sweden. Morphology, Inheritance and Association with Other Skin and Rheumatic Diseases. By Lars Hellgren. (Pp. 106; 23 tables. Sw. kr. 32.) Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksells. 1967.

Tattooing. The Prevalence of Tattooed Persons in Total Populations. Association with Skin and Rheumatic Diseases. By Lars Hellgren. (Pp. 72; 2 figures + tables. Sw. kr. 24.) Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksells. 1967.

The author undertook a large statistical, epidemiological, and clinical survey of a population of about 40,000 in Sweden between January 1961 and May 1963. This investigation was made possible by virtue of his connexion with the Swedish Mass X-ray Service. The geographical area involved measured about 1500 kilometres from north to south and about 150 to 650 kilometres from east to west. He gives details of his statistical methods and full details of punching, storing, calculation, and sorting for use on the Datasab D.21 Computer. In the first monograph he illustrates very clearly how much a programme can be used, giving as an example xanthelasma palpebrarum. His main object was to carry out an epidemiological study on skin and rheumatic disease in total populations in Sweden in subjects over the age of 7 years. In addition to diseases of the skin he included tattooing. His particular interests were: (1) geographical studies to determine the incidence of these diseases in different areas; (2) analyses of climatic, professional, social, economic, and other factors in relation to the origin and development of the diseases; and (3) family and genetic studies. Incidences of many skin diseases are given, for he has a long and comprehensive list. For the commoner disorders this is a valuable contribution in itself as a work of reference.

The prevalence of tattooing in this population and its association with skin and rheumatic diseases are discussed in the second monograph. There are two interesting chapters on the history and geographical distribution of tattooing, and the material methods used, and the information is clearly set out. Tattooing was more commonly seen in the more densely crowded urban areas than in rural districts. It was generally carried out between the ages of 15 and 24 years, and the incidence in males varied from 4 to 10%, and in females it was negligible. Occupations such as docker, chimney-sweep, fisherman, hairdresser, woodworker, and 'forgeworker' were the commonest.

The possibility of a mathematical association of tattooing with diseases of the skin and rheumatic disorders was investigated. Of the various diseases recorded in the

survey, there was no significant difference in frequency between the tattooed and the non-tattooed groups, and this certainly covered all the more common skin disorders. Only in the case of psoriasis was the disease significantly more frequent among tattooed persons. For rheumatic diseases there was no statistical difference between the tattooed and the non-tattooed groups.

Prevalence of psoriasis in the dense populations was about 2.3% for males and 1.5% for females. Much statistical information is provided, but unfortunately none that is really helpful in deciding prognosis. These monographs are useful for reference, as are the details on the setting up of a computer trial in such circumstances.

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Translocation in Human Chromosomes with Special Reference to Mental Retardation and Congenital Malformations. Norwegian Monographs on Medical Science. By Anton Brøgger. (Pp. 136; illustrated + tables. Norw. kr. 52.50.) Norway: Universitetsforlaget. 1967.

This monograph describes the results of chromosome studies on a relatively small series of patients with Down's syndrome, some of their relatives, and an even smaller group of patients who were selected because of multiple congenital malformations associated with mental retardation. No information is given, however, of the way in which the congenitally malformed group of subjects was selected, and this would have been invaluable in assessing the significance of the chromosome findings. The findings on Down's syndrome subjects basically confirm those of other authors.

There is a brief section on the general subject of chromosome aberrations and included in this is a section on nomenclature which introduces an entirely new system using terms 'simplex', 'duplex', and 'triplex' to indicate the presence of chromosome material in single, double, and triple doses. This is confusing and unnecessary, besides departing from normal cytogenetic usage. The complexities of this system are illustrated by the following example taken from the first paragraph of page 67 which reads: 'The children are then triplex-D/17, or more precisely triplex short arm D + triplex maximally 33.3 per cent long arm D + triplex maximally 50 per cent long arm 17.' The author also finds it necessary to introduce a new numerical system to describe gametes produced by translocation heterozygotes. This is indicated in Fig. 3 and 32 only, and thereafter in the text the gametic types are referred to by number, so that on each occasion a particular gamete is referred to, the figure has to be checked to see which chromosome constitution is meant. This is both irritating and confusing. The book is full of statements, of which the following are but a selection:

Page 86: 'Cases of subtriplex-G₂ + subduplex-G₁ have not been found. This leads to the assumption that the centromere of the translocation chromosome is derived from a G₂ chromosome since the alternate and adjacent-1 configurations presumably are most frequent.'