Book Reviews

FETAL AND POSTNATAL CELLULAR GROWTH: HORMONES AND NUTRITION. By Donald Cheek. New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1975. 538 pp. $29.50.

Dr. Donald Cheek has been interested in body growth and composition for many years and in 1968 published Human Growth. To gain information specifically about fetal growth and immediate postnatal growth Dr. Cheek turned to a primate, Macaca mulatta. A series of extensive and rigorous investigations on prenatal growth, especially of the brain, has been performed by Dr. Cheek and his many collaborators. This book presents the results of those investigations, and discusses them in the context of our current knowledge of prenatal growth in humans and in other species which have been utilized for investigations.

The information in the book is very well organized and many of the individual chapters present a most readable combination of experimental data and placement of the data in the broader context of our current understanding of the question being investigated. The section of the book concerned with brain growth is outstanding, and Dr. Cheek's review (in Chapter 6) of studies relating nutritional restriction and brain growth concisely summarizes a most complicated area.

The major value of this book for the biomedical community is the enormous amount of data concerning the model Macaca mulatta. There is little doubt that the primate will increasingly become a resource for investigations in the area of prenatal growth, natal adaptation, and postnatal development. Dr. Cheek has not only broken the ground in establishing normative information, but has already made significant contributions regarding specific questions, such as the effects of certain hormones on fetal growth and the effect of nutrition on fetal growth.

This book most lucidly compiles previously published information concerning prenatal development in a primate model. It will serve as a valuable reference for investigators interested in prenatal growth and development for many years.

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OTOSCLEROSIS: GENETICS AND SURGICAL REHABILITATION. By Boris Gapany-Gapanavičius. New York, Halsted Press, 1975. 249 pp. $23.50.

This text is written primarily for the student of otology. It provides a carefully executed study of genetic factors at play in otosclerosis, a disease now recognized for its transmission as an autosomal dominant trait. Otosclerosis consists histopathologically of bony overgrowths located adjacent to the stapedial foot-plate, producing various degrees of ankylosis and resultant conductive hearing loss. Surgical management consists of removing the diseased stapes and replacing it with a piston prosthesis.

In my opinion, the author's depth of genetic evaluation makes interesting and stimulating reading but can be confusing for the student looking for a quick, easy reference about a single aspect of the disease process. The absence of an index clearly contributes to this difficulty. The photo-micrographs used in this text reproduced well
but lack sufficient clarity. Complicated, detailed tables prevent use of this text in rapid reference.

In general, the strength of this text consists of its genetic analysis based upon audiometric and surgical data subjected to computer analyses. The search is for the genetic patterns responsible for the surgical findings and postoperative hearing results. In this context the book is fascinating. As a reference text, it is disappointing.

The genetic transmission of human disease continues to challenge medical science. In this regard Professor Gapany-Gapanavičius has attempted to further our knowledge of otosclerosis through the statistical correlation of surgical and genetic data.

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MARIJUANA AND HEALTH HAZARDS. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN CURRENT RESEARCH. Edited by Jared R. Tinklenberg. New York, Academic Press, 1975. 178 pp. $8.50.

Books about marijuana, marijuana and health, marijuana and youth, marijuana and crime, and marijuana and soda pop have become as common as books about sex. It thus becomes difficult for any interested scientist to decide what is worth reading or what is worth getting. Marijuana and Health Hazards is a book which every worker in the field and every person interested in the research issues surrounding marijuana should read and perhaps buy. This up-to-date volume serves not only as a reference for the present state of knowledge about the possible damaging effects of marijuana, but serves also as an excellent text on research methodology. It is a fine source for critical reviews of the cytogenetic effects of drugs and provides a background for examination of almost any of the drug toxicity literature. Each section is clearly written and understandable to the general reader. A great deal of useful knowledge is presented and an elegant summary of the entire meeting entitled, "Passions, Pot and Science Policy" by Daniel X. Freedman, should be required reading for anyone who has ever considered the problem of the use of marijuana in our society. Perhaps the most cogent point made by Dr. Freedman is:

...the real concern today... is, I think, the use of drugs by children. It is most bizarre that we have now had commissions and squads of scientists searching for therapeutic effects of certain drugs because the children of the middle class took up a particular chemical, as if such a discovery would sanctify the recreational use or compulsive misuse of a chemical. But in a larger sense, the heat and concern in every society is always centered around who shall capture the mind of the child. Few would argue that the healthy development of children and adolescents is enhanced by unsupervised and unregulated intoxications, and none of us can be unconcerned about the fact that all of our recreational drugs seem to be used by some to their psychological disadvantage. And we do not know cause or effect in these instances, nor can we predict exactly who might be in trouble if he takes marijuana. But we all can and do share concern about how to guide the young to adulthood.

Borrow or buy, but in any case, read this book.

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