beneficial in any way other than prolonging dying," the medical indications policy still leaves doctors, patients, and families with the unenviable burden of defining such intangibles as "dying" and "beneficial." In some instances his policy even leads Ramsey into patent absurdities such as defining an anencephalic infant to be dead, despite the fact that an anencephalic infant meets at most one of the four Harvard criteria for brain-death.

Readers buried by the continuing avalanche of anthologies in medical ethics should welcome this cogent, comprehensive, well-referenced, and carefully indexed presentation, which Ramsey claims will be his last book in medical ethics. *Ethics at the Edges of Life* is especially suited to readers with a fairly sophisticated background in medical ethics and/or law; without such a background, both the book's style and its content may prove overly dense. Perhaps Ramsey best characterizes both the book and himself when he quotes from Soren Kierkegaard:

> It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theater. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was a jest and applauded. He repeated his warning, they shouted even louder. So I think the world will come to an end amid general applause from all the wits, who believe that it is a joke.

Indeed, Ramsey's message is as important and as oft ignored as the clown's warning. No doubt this last book is his attempt to remove clown-suit and make-up. I suspect the discerning reader will agree with me that he at least partially succeeds.

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**Comparative Endocrinology of Prolactin.** Edited by Horst-Dieter Dellman, J. Alan Johnson, and D.M. Klachko. New York, Plenum Press, 1977. 215 pp. $22.50.

It was discovered in 1970 that human prolactin is a separate hormone from human growth hormone. Human prolactin was found to be clinically important; high concentrations in the blood may indicate the presence of a pituitary tumor, and high levels are the cause of some cases of secondary amenorrhea. Because there has been so much interest generated in prolactin, a good review of what is known would be useful. This book, although there are chapters which are good reviews, has several faults. The book is the proceedings of the Tenth Midwest Conference on Endocrinology which was held in 1974, but the book was not published until 1977. Although some of the authors have revised their chapters since 1974, the book does not contain recent developments; for example, it was published in 1976 that prolactin is synthesized as a prohormone and this is not included. The book is titled *Comparative Endocrinology of Prolactin*, but almost all of the chapters concentrate on humans and rats, and there is little attempt to make comparisons systematically. Since prolactin has different actions in different species, this would have been worthwhile. Several of the authors felt it necessary to review control of prolactin secretion, even if this was not the primary subject, and this repetition should have been removed by the editors.

The chapters that are good reviews are Dr. Farquhar's chapter on formation and release of secretory granules where the studies were performed in rats, Dr. Frantz's chapter on regulation of human prolactin, and Dr. Jacobs' chapter on the role of prolactin in milk secretion from humans. There is a fascinating chapter by Dr. Meier which is comparative endocrinology; he compares the increases in fat stores caused
by prolactin in such animals as the golden topminnow, white-throated sparrow, and golden hamster, and the effect of circadian rhythms on the increases.

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Gonorrhea: Epidemiology and Pathogenesis. Edited by F.A. Skinner, P.D. Walker, and H. Smith. London, Academic Press, 1977. 255 pp. $21.50.

The incidence of gonorrhea increased rapidly in the industrial nations during the 1960s and early 1970s, and public health efforts were powerless to stop the epidemic. This has led to increased research activity on gonorrhea, particularly to a search for a rapid screening test and for an effective vaccine. Progress has been made, although the vaccine and the screening test have proved elusive. This monograph is the collected papers of a symposium on gonorrhea research organized in November 1976, for the European Microbiological Societies. As a review of the decade's intensified laboratory research on gonorrhea, it is welcome and recommended. Its title, however, is misleading, because there is very little said about the epidemiology of gonorrhea.

Most of the papers focus on the pathogenesis of the disease (considering such issues as the mechanism of bacterial attachment to mucosal cells, the role of the pili in attachment and immunity, and the differential efficiency of phagocytosis by polymorphonuclear leucocytes and macrophages), or on the immunology and immunochemistry of gonorrhea. Some nice electron photomicrographs are given.

The book is a good technical review of the research issues and the state-of-the-art in the areas mentioned above, but it is not an easy book for the neophyte. The editing leaves something to be desired, because there is considerable repetition from paper to paper, and some are poorly written. Also, the papers vary considerably in length and value. The book’s chief use will be as a compendium of current progress in gonorrhea research for the microbiologist or immunologist, and as a reference for clinicians with a special interest in gonorrhea. It is recommended for institutional, but not personal, libraries.

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