

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Genetics and the Epidemiology of Chronic Disease.

Edited by J. V. NEEL, M. W. SHAW, and W. J. SCHULL (1964). Pp. 395. U.S. Department of Health Education.

This book contains a series of papers presented at a Symposium on "Contributions of Genetics to Epidemiologic Studies of Chronic Disease" at Ann Arbor in 1963, and provides a useful review of the problems involved in family surveys. The difficulties involved in interpreting family studies are stressed, and the problems of ascertainment and genetic analysis are discussed in detail. The value of twin studies is lucidly discussed and the fallacies enumerated. The evaluation of twin studies presents particular difficulty in diseases which are age-dependent and this aspect is discussed.

Rheumatologists will be particularly interested in the studies of rheumatoid arthritis and rheumatic fever by Harvald and Hauge and the remarkable concordance rates obtained in monozygous twins. The warning that monozygous twins share a common environment to a greater degree than dizygous is timely, but perhaps unduly stressed.

The epidemiologists discuss their aims, methods, and results in a number of chronic diseases, using both national statistics as in breast cancer, and population samples as in lung cancer. Familial aggregation may be due to genetic or environmental causes and the problem of how to differentiate between them is fully discussed. The value of the mating type test in this connexion is considered and its fallacies exposed. There is much sound comment on the use of questionnaires and the limitation imposed by memory as shown by the rapid decline in the number of illnesses reported with increasing time before the interview.

The only rheumatic disease which is discussed in detail is rheumatoid arthritis and this is considered from both the psycho-social and the genetic aspects. The absence of familial aggregation of rheumatoid arthritis as defined by the American Rheumatism

Association criteria in two Indian tribes is commented on, but the possibility that the inclusion of "probable" disease may have blurred the findings is not considered.

*J. S. Lawrence*

**Pathology of Bone.** By the late DOUGLAS COLLINS, prepared for publication by O. G. DODGE (1966). Pp. 254. Butterworths, London. (£3 12s. 6d.)

Douglas Collins' writings on non-neoplastic diseases of bone (which were to have formed part of a larger work) have, through the industry of friends and colleagues, been preserved for us in this volume. It is a fine memorial to one of Britain's pioneers of bone pathology.

Introductory chapters on the structure, chemistry, and growth of bone are followed by sections on fracture pathology, osteomalacia, osteoporosis, skeletal lesions in endocrine and renal disease, histiocytosis "X", the lipidoses, the skeletal effects of radiation, osteomyelitis, and Paget's disease. Idiopathic osteosis and fibrogenesis imperfecta are surprisingly omitted.

Collins' method of describing diseases, which largely avoids the rigid subdivisions of a formal presentation, and his characteristically lively and clear style make even the difficult sections easy to read and understand. The subject matter is presented with the obvious intention of providing a sound basis on which the budding pathologist can build, rather than a practical guide for histological diagnosis. This commendable approach perhaps explains the absence of a technical section and the rather infrequent use of correlated histo-radiographical illustrations.

Each section is accompanied by a generous bibliography but very few of the references are later than 1962. In the circumstances this is understandable and if it means that some of the recent technical and conceptual advances escape attention, the general excellence of the book will ensure it a very wide welcome indeed.

*John Ball*

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