

BOOK REVIEWS

Population Studies of the Rheumatic Diseases. Proceedings of the Third International Symposium, New York, June 5-10, 1966. Edited by P. H. BENNETT and P. H. N. WOOD. 1968. Pp. 510, 8 plates and many figures. *Excerpta Medica* (International Congress Series No. 148), Amsterdam. (£13 8s.)

This symposium was planned as a critical review of methods with special emphasis on genetic studies and as such it includes some excellent essays on general principles that should be read by anyone undertaking surveys or clinical studies. The diagnostic criteria for the various rheumatic diseases proposed by the second symposium held in Rome in 1961 were reviewed and modified and the deliberations of the subcommittees doing this illuminate nicely the problems involved.

Reports of numerous surveys from different parts of the world dealing with rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, gout, osteoarthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and Still's disease are also included, together with two useful appendices, helpfully identified by different coloured paper, summarizing recommendations and giving details of the methods used in the many surveys referred to in the text. This provides a mine of useful information not easily obtained from other sources, but unfortunately the data are not quite complete in that not all those working in the field were represented.

The book is attractively produced and records much progress including a shift of viewpoint due largely to the pioneer clinical observers adapting themselves to the disciplines of professional epidemiologists and geneticists.

The combination of a critical review with the report of a mass of data has produced a volume of excessive length and price, and one cannot help feeling that the untimely death of Dr. Joseph J. Bunim before he had completed the plans for the meeting contributed to the minor shortcomings of an otherwise most valuable symposium which is in

many ways a tribute to Dr. Bunim's genius.

Commended for selective reading and reference. Parts are the life blood of research in this field while others illustrate the ever present danger of drowning in a sea of data.

J. H. KELLGREN

Research in Muscular Dystrophy. Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium, January, 1968. Edited by the Members of the Research Committee of the MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY GROUP. Pitman Medical Publishing Co., London. (60s.)

This soft-covered book of nearly 500 pages contains the proceedings of the fourth symposium held under the auspices of the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain. The subject matter contains research into other diseases besides muscular dystrophy, *e.g.*, myasthenis gravis and denervating conditions.

It is divided into four sections; the first is of most interest to clinicians, consisting of such studies as the relationship between myasthenia and thyroid disease, myopathy, and metabolic bone disease. The second part concerns anatomical and pathological studies, including newer work on methylene blue staining *in vivo* of the neuromuscular junction. The third section is concerned with biochemical studies, much of which is on experimental animals. The fourth section is concerned with neurophysiological work and is also of direct value for the clinician.

There is at present an enormous amount of research in muscular disease and probably the greatest practical advances are concerned with the detection of carriers, both biochemically, with the use of enzymes such as phospho-creatine-kinase, and by electromyography.

The Muscular Dystrophy Group is to be congratulated on their choice of research workers, whose quality is of such high standard and whose work is already giving dividends in a research area hitherto considered to be unrewarding. F. CLIFFORD ROSE