

REVIEWS

HUMAN CHROMOSOMES. S. Makino. North Holland Publishing Co., Amsterdam and Oxford, 1975. Pp. 600+5 text figures, 152 plate figures. \$60.50.

In the preface of his book, Professor Makino states that during the organisation of the latter part of the volume, he was faced with the rapid and surprising development in new staining methods for human chromosomes. Only limited use is therefore made of modern developments derived from studies on chromosomes stained and banded by the new techniques. This is a major criticism of an otherwise comprehensive account of the current state of knowledge in human chromosome research. However, although the majority of karyotypes shown in the illustrations for the book are those stained by conventional techniques, comprehensive coverage of the new banding methods is given in the section dealing with Chromosome Methodology.

After an interesting historical introduction, and sections dealing with Methods and Nomenclature, the greater part of the volume covers the chromosome features of normal and affected states derived in the main from studies on Japanese populations. In this context the book serves the very useful purpose of bringing together a great deal of information gathered by Japanese workers that was not hitherto readily available. In addition to inherited congenital abnormalities, accounts are given of the chromosomal findings in neoplastic, radiation-exposed and virus infected subjects. In particular, the section dealing with irradiation is highly informative, giving a detailed account of the findings from survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, and from fishermen exposed to fallout irradiation at Bikini.

Overall, the book contains a wealth of information collected by Professor Makino, his students and his many Japanese cytogenetic colleagues, and should serve as a useful source of information for comparisons with data obtained in studies on other racial groups.

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CHROMOSOMES AND CANCER. Edited by James German. John Wiley and Sons, New York, London, Sydney, Toronto, 1974. Pp. 781 (incl. Index). (Volume one of projected "Chromosome" series.) £17.40.

The stated objective of this book has been to include reviews of the major areas investigated in the field of chromosomes and cancer during the fifty years up to "the beginning of the era of cytogenetic banding techniques". There is no question that those sections dealing with purely descriptive cytogenetics suffer from the paucity of reference to information obtained from chromosome banding. Indeed this shortcoming is highlighted by the single paper (M. W. Shaw and T. R. Chen) dealing specifically with the application of banding techniques to tumour chromosomes.

Having made this criticism it must be emphasised that the title has been very liberally interpreted so that chromosome identification forms only a small part of the content matter. From the introductory chapters—a