



BOOK REVIEW

Annual Review of Genomics and Human Genetics. Eric Lander, David Page, Richard Lifton (eds.). Palo Alto, California: Annual Reviews. pp 582. ISBN: 0-8243-3701-8. Price: £99.99

Do we need another review series now we have *Nature Review Genetics*, *Trends in Genetics*, and all the current opinion journals? Does anybody have time to read them now? Must we have another high impact journal almost every month? The answer depends as much on the reader's taste as on the way the dish is served. In this regard the annual reviews series has always been unique because of its consistent high quality and broad scope. The editors of the new *Annual Review of Genomics and Human Genetics* aim to cover these fields in the broadest sense and this they do. This means that while few will read this book from cover to cover, there certainly is something to savour here for everybody. In this first issue for instance, there is a fascinating account by James Crow of his personal experience with human genetics as it developed from its early beginnings with the chromosome maps of the Sturtevant and Morgan labs working on *Drosophila*. Crow takes us back in time so that we can experience what great skills and determination it took to make those early important discoveries. It is enlightening to see cytogenetics described as 'pitiful' in the first half of the last century. But what joy it is to read about discoveries that might have been made but weren't. As Crow says: 'some were overlooked,

others were simply regarded as uninteresting'. There is a lesson here for all of us. Surely there must be things out there even now to discover which are not recognized because we cannot see beyond our own fixed beliefs? There is much more in this 580-page first volume. Many chapters will appeal to clinical geneticists and those working in diagnostic settings. Scholarly accounts of the genetics of trinucleotide repeat diseases, disorders of iron metabolism, Williams syndrome, newborn screening, and public concern about genetics, are examples of this. On the other hand, fundamental aspects of genetics and genomics are included also, such as estimating allele age, gene family evolution, methods for large scale analysis of sequence variation, or bioinformatic tools. Clearly, this new genomics and human genetics volume is much more appealing to human geneticists than the annual review of genetics which has been on the shelves of many human genetics department's libraries. In short: there is something here for everybody. This new series of high quality reviews can compete with the best in the field.

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