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PHILIP M. LE COMPTE, M.D.
Boston

BOOK REVIEWS

DIABETES MELLITUS: A HANDBOOK FOR NURSES. By Marguerite M. Martin, R.N. \$3.50, pp. 167, W. B. Saunders, Co., Philadelphia and London, 1960.

The author has written a handbook for nurses which touches upon all phases of diabetes. In this endeavor she has had a unique advantage and stimulus in that her husband has had diabetes for over thirty years. She has carefully and comprehensively outlined the opportunities, duties and problems confronting nurses in the management of diabetes.

Nurses should know the symptoms of diabetes so well that they are able to recognize the condition quickly. It is necessary for them to know all new drugs in general use. The nurse should understand that because a diabetic individual falls into a certain age group, or patient type this does not necessarily indicate that he will respond to treatment with the oral agent usually applicable to his group. Moreover, nurses need to be familiar with possible side effects of the oral hypoglycemic

drugs as well as insulin, so that they will be able to call them promptly to the physician's attention. Very close surveillance of postoperative diabetic patients by the nurse is necessary.

In accordance with modern broad concepts, nurses must recognize their responsibility to the community in teaching prevention, and detection. They can assist in the detection drives conducted by the American Diabetes Association each November. Industrial nurses in particular have an opportunity to play a part of inestimable value in the detection of unknown diabetics. Because of the confidence and affection engendered in employees over a period of years, the industrial nurse is able to assist, teach, and encourage diabetic workers who are concerned or confused about their condition or its management.

As pointed out in this publication a great deal of education in diabetes should be assigned to nurses in their various capacities. Although there are numerous handbooks for diabetic patients written in simplified language, this book is very suitable for background material for the nurse who is concerned with education since it is the product of a nurse experienced in this area.

AN OUTLINE OF CHEMICAL GENETICS. By Bernard S. Strauss, Ph.D. \$5.00, pp. 188, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia & London, 1960.

This excellent book summarizes the chief developments in the rapidly advancing field of chemical genetics. Dr. Strauss cites the evidence for deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) being the code-carrying material that is transmitted in heredity. He gives a concise picture of the helical structure and chemical constitution of the DNA molecule, with evidence in support of the Watson-Crick model and its proposed mechanism of replication. There is a good description of what may constitute a gene from the operational and chemical standpoint, and how it may carry the hereditary code and transmit it. Also well described are the template relationships between DNA and RNA (ribonucleic acid) and the proposed mechanisms by which the arrangement of purine and pyrimidine bases in these structures may order the sequence of amino acids that regulate and determine which protein is synthesized. An entire chapter is devoted to current concepts of the mechanism of protein and hence enzyme synthesis. Mutations and their possible mechanisms of production at the chemical or gene level are described.

There is a short chapter only on the biochemical genetics of man; but there is a concise review of three well-chosen examples of inborn errors of metabolism or human genetic disease about which most is known concerning the precise enzymatic defects or alteration in protein structure, which illustrates well the concept of molecular disease. This gives insight into the manner by which a single gene—enzyme or gene—polypeptide defect can produce a multiplicity of apparently unrelated symptoms and signs (pleiotropy) in a specific disease.

The subject matter covered here lays a groundwork for understanding much of the recent progress in human genetics and medical genetics, accomplishments that, coupled with those that have been achieved in human cytogenetics, are providing a fresh approach to the causation and pathogenesis of many diseases. In other instances they give us new insight into the mechanisms underlying many of the variable responses, both beneficial and toxic, that occur with drug therapy.