

BOOK REVIEWS

DIABETES MELLITUS: REPORT OF A WHO EXPERT COMMITTEE. \$1.00. New York, Columbia University Press International Documents Service.

This booklet is a general, and in some instances specific description of the diabetes problem in the world today based upon the consensus of nine diabetes experts drawn from the World Health Organization membership at a meeting in November 1964 in Geneva, Switzerland. The report is available in the United States from Columbia University Press, International Documents Service, 2960 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027, or from World Health Organization, Distribution and Sales Unit, Geneva, Switzerland, for \$1.

The monograph contains sections devoted to the natural history of diabetes mellitus and its causes, with considerable detail concerning definitions of stages of diabetes and laboratory criteria for diagnosis. Prevention of diabetes and its complications is discussed in a general way in view of the sparse information available as a basis for agreement throughout the world. The principles of treatment of the established diabetic patient consequently are outlined in general fashion, whereas considerably more detail is given to outlining programs by which case finding, follow-up, and treatment of newly detected diabetics or borderline cases can be facilitated.

Some general recommendations are made concerning the employment of diabetics, life insurance, and possibilities for future research.

In an appendix section are given summaries of results of diabetes detection surveys in various countries for the years 1946-1964, the distribution of blood glucose values among pregnant women by trimester of pregnancy for the years 1954-1955, and comparison of the technics for testing blood and urine glucose.

GENETICS IN MEDICINE. J. S. Thompson, M.D., and M. W. Thompson, Ph.D. \$7.50. 300 pages. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Co., 1966.

This short book is one of several which have recently been published in the field of human genetics. The virtue of this particular volume lies in its brevity and clarity, allowing the practicing physician to acquaint himself quickly with current advances in this rapidly moving field. It is only to be expected that this brevity has led to a number of oversimplifications. These, however, do not detract from the primary purpose of this book as stated.

Diabetes as a genetic disease is mentioned several times in this book, but primarily as an example of a complex unsolved situation. These examples are useful for the practitioner interested in diabetes, since they will hopefully prevent him from misstating the current knowledge of the mode of inheritance of diabetes mellitus.

ON THE NATURE AND TREATMENT OF DIABETES. Edited by Bernard S. Leibel and Gerald A. Wrenshall. \$25.00. 805 pages. Amsterdam, Excerpta Medica International Congress Series No. 84, 1965.

Investigators and clinicians in the field of diabetes will be glad to find the papers presented at the Fifth Congress of the International Diabetes Federation in Toronto in book form. As indicated by its ambitious title, the collection of papers covers most of the areas of active research in the field from electron microscopy through molecular biology to the clinical problems of the individual with diabetes mellitus. The manuscripts were prepared by outstanding students of the disorder from many nations, and others have contributed to the discussions which are lively and informative.

The volume is divided into groups of papers, or chapters, dealing with related topics at the end of which there are several pages of discussion. Thus the first series, including papers by Lacy, Haist and Lazarow, describes studies of the anatomy and physiology of islet cells, another covers the actions of insulin on protein metabolism and a third its effect on carbohydrate metabolism. Insulin antagonists, antibodies and assays are some of the other subjects covered in the first part of the book.

The second half of the book is devoted to clinical problems. The dietary management of vascular disease is described as well as recent studies in nephropathy and neuropathy. Caird has contributed a very useful chapter on the natural history of diabetic retinopathy, introducing a group of four papers reviewing treatment with different methods of pituitary ablation or suppression. In his chapter on diabetic acidosis, Nabarro includes succinct descriptions of non-ketotic hyperosmolar coma and lactic acidosis. Genetic problems, prediabetes and "sub-clinical diabetes" are all considered and there is a series of papers discussing the fetal and maternal aspects of pregnancy.

For a mature and critical review of the influence of control of diabetes on vascular complications, the reader is referred to the excellent paper by Ricketts. In a similar vein are the chapters by F. G. Young and by Williams and Wood. Houssay's introduction is a lucid fact-filled summary of the entire book.

The editors deserve congratulations for putting together fifty-seven papers in a well organized book that offers both the researcher and clinician authoritative information regarding recent advances in the field of diabetes. The index will be most useful to those who wish to add the book to their reference libraries. This reviewer found every chapter worthwhile and several outstanding. He recommends it highly to students of diabetes.