

Book review

Down syndrome – A Practitioner's Guide. Manouri P. Senanayake. (Paperback; 71 pages: Rs.200.00)
Colombo: Globe Printing Works, 2002.

Down syndrome or trisomy 21 is an important condition that is familiar to all medical personnel. Yet the many intricacies of different aspects of this syndrome are varied and perhaps some are not well known. Indeed, it is rather difficult to find all the relevant details documented in a single volume.

This book is an admirable effort on the part of Dr Manouri Senanayake to put together the wide-ranging details of this condition in precise and simple language. The latest information on many aspects of the syndrome together with possible explanations or hypotheses for some of the features are given in no-nonsense language that is easy to understand. The genetics section deals rather well on the different aetiological types. The descriptions of clinical implications of the many components and the practical advice make the contents so valuable. I particularly liked the pre-natal diagnosis and pre-natal risk assessment that incorporate some up-to-date information on these aspects. The schedule for health checks would be quite

useful for continued follow up of these patients. The local and foreign resource centres given would be value to doctors who need to advise parents.

The style of writing is detailed and attractive. The nomenclature and history section gives some definitions that would titillate the literary palate of the connoisseur. The book is a comprehensive account of the many different aspects of this unfortunate quirk of nature. Apart from a few typographical errors, it is a very readable book that should be classified as essential knowledge for any practitioner called upon to deal with children or adults with Down syndrome. When one considers the immense effort that has gone into the production, the price of this book is reasonable.

It is obvious that the author has also incorporated a lifetime of experience and empathy gained in working with these children into this book. All of us could benefit from her wisdom, and could increase our own skills and confidence when faced with a child with Down syndrome.

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