

## Book Reviews

### World Medical Journal - Issue devoted to twin studies

Official Journal of the World Medical Association (New York). Edited by Stanley S. B. Gilder (London). Published by *Domus Medica* (Copenhagen). Vol. 14, N. 6, November-December 1967.

Since their first being the object of scientific interest in Francis Galton's work on "The history of twins as a criterion of the relative powers of nature and nurture" in 1875, twins have been arousing growing interest in ever larger areas of Medicine and Biology.

This has culminated in more recent years in the establishment of a number of specialized Centers for Twin Studies (generally as a means to human and medical genetic research) such as the Rome "Gregor Mendel Institute for Medical Genetics and Twin Research"; in the establishment and running up of "Twin Registers", such as the Scandinavian ones; in a number of specialized publications and Journals, such as the "Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae"; in the publication of authoritative reports, such as the 1965 Report of the WHO Meeting of Investigators on Methodology of Twin Studies ("The Use of Twins in Epidemiological Studies"); and, last but not least, in an International Symposium on Twin Studies, recently called by the Mendel Institute, and to be held in Rome in 1969.

The importance of twins in Medicine has been recently stressed by the authoritative World Medical Journal, the Official Journal of the World Medical Association, by devoting a recent issue (Nov.-Dec. 1967) to Twin Studies. This includes the following articles, by leading scientists:

*The Value of Twin Studies in Epidemiology* (R. Cederlöf), stressing the difficulties in obtaining strictly comparable controls in epidemiological studies and the importance of the unique opportunity provided by the existence and

possibility of comparison of identical and non-identical twins.

*Twin Research and Psychiatry: past findings and present trends* (J. Shields), indicating the importance for psychology and psychiatry of discriminating between hereditary and environmental factors in human behaviour, especially as far as delinquency is concerned, and the prominent role which may be played by twins in such studies.

*Twin Studies in Orthopaedics* (K. H. Berquet), concerning the possible extension of twin research to the study of postural defects, scoliosis and other anomalies of the vertebral column, which may all show a strong genetic component.

*Twinning in West Africa* (P. P. S. Nylander), reviewing the incidence of twinning in some West African countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia), as well as examining the causal factors of the phenomenon and its relationships to fetal mortality.

*Twin Studies in Rheumatoid Arthritis* (J. A. Boyle, W. R. Greig, W. W. Buchanan), criticising past studies because of their failure to exactly discriminate between MZ and DZ twins, and describing the results of more precise, recent studies, suggesting that the existence of a relatively weak genetic predisposition (40%) to rheumatoid arthritis.

### Twins and supertwins

By Amram Scheinfeld, J. B. Lippincott Company - Philadelphia and New York, 1967. Bound volume with jacket. 292 pages. 21 illustrations. 9 tables or charts. 15×23 cm. \$ 6.95.

Twins are not only the object of wider and wider scientific interest, but of general curiosity as well, because of the uniqueness of their condition, and/or of direct concern to a fairly large fraction of the general population, because of their relatively high fre-