First described only 11 years ago, it has an extraordinarily circumscribed geographical distribution and a high rate of local endemicity, often involving several members of affected households, and thus makes an excellent model for an aetiological study.

The first 5 chapters of this book describe the clinical and epidemiological aspects of the disease, as it is seen in Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, and, because they are largely reviews of already published material, serve a useful purpose for unfamiliar readers. The results of some recent urinary protein studies, using electrophoretic, immuno-electrophoretic, and gel-diffusion techniques are next presented. These indicate that the proteinuria is predominantly of tubular origin—finding consistent with the morphological changes observed in renal biopsy and necropsy specimens. They also reveal that tubular proteinuria may exist, undetected by less sophisticated methods, in apparently healthy children, at an age when clinical manifestations are rare.

Each chapter consists of a paper followed by a discussion held by a group of distinguished participants. The potential roles of genetics, climate, and altitude, flora and fauna, diet, water supply, and microbial infections are fully discussed and, as the story unfolds, it seems that every conceivable approach has been considered. The purpose of the study group was to muster all the available scientific data in an attempt to throw new light on the aetiology of the disorder, and it is inevitable that many important facts and opinions emerge only during discussion. It is, therefore, necessary to read the whole work, preferably without interruption, if a proper grasp of the subject is to be obtained.

The book is well written and can easily be read in an evening, though the chapters on proteinuria do demand a basic knowledge of modern protein analytical methods. It is not a book for the busy general paediatrician, but will fascinate those interested in epidemiology and the screening of apparently healthy children for subclinical disease, and should certainly be read by nephrophiles.


No one has greater right to prepare such a monograph than Jørgen Pedersen of Copenhagen. He has studied the subject for 20 years and has paid equal attention to mother and baby, both as a critical clinician and as a scientist. He has carefully submitted his results to the searching light of statistical analysis.

All of this experience is now neatly summarized and acceptably presented in this small volume which, in just over 200 pages and almost 400 references, provides the best review yet available. In this subject there is room for controversy, and differences, possibly true differences, exist between different centres, but the author carefully acknowledges these and indicates those areas in which future study is needed.

There are a few misprints, but both the English and the print are clear and pleasing. As inevitably happens in a rapidly expanding field like this, the more recent and often exciting references are omitted, but the years 1966 and 1967 are represented, especially where the author and his colleagues are involved; and they are, of course, still in the forefront of research.


This welcome book should correct many misconceptions about twin placentation, still current in the teaching of medical students and midwives. Many have the opportunity to examine the placenta of twins: