

## Leon E. Rosenberg and Diane Drobnis Rosenberg: *Human Genes and Genomes: Science, Health, Society*

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“In today’s DNA age,  
the fate of Genetics is bound to change,  
at a rate so very fast.  
Nevertheless, one cannot forget the past!”

Well, what better ways than to start this book review with a short poem, as mentioned by Charles R. Scriver in the Foreword-‘While modern genetics and ancient heredity will not cease to permeate culture, there will always be room for the poetry.’

In *Human Genes And Genomes: Science, Health and Society*, Dr Leon and Diane Rosenberg set out to introduce Human Genetics, which indeed is a very complex task. However, the authors have pitched this book at a level to suit a broad audience, with or without a background in science or genetics. For someone like me, with medical training but new to Human Genetics, this book has enticed me into a mysterious world. Right at the outset, the book gives the impression of being well organised and thoughtfully planned. It reflects the authors’ commitment to education and does full justice to this ever-expanding and constantly changing subject.

The book consists of three main parts, which are approached systematically. Part 1 covers ‘Core Concepts’. This material proved useful to me as a refresher course for what I had previously encountered, as well as providing more in-depth information that was interesting. In Chapter 4 of this section, the authors have compared the relationship between genome, chromosome and gene with a set of Russian dolls which formed a strong base for understanding this concept.

Part 2 covers ‘Genetic Disorders’—this section provides both historical and contemporary perspectives on genetic disorders. There is a chapter dedicated to the detection and treatment of genetic disorders, which concludes with an optimistic view for future therapies.

Part 3 covers ‘Genes in the population and individuals’—this section examines the basics of population genetics and provides an insight into the potential domain of personalised genetics. The implications of Direct-To-Consumer Genomic Testing have been elucidated for readers with the help of a story, re-emphasising the positive and negative impacts of this information.

In summary, the writing is clear and well supported by photographs and drawings used effectively with plenty of illustrative examples. There are review questions and answers for each chapter, including web-based resources. There is some repetition of material but not too much. The book also contains information about the companion website, which can be accessed for teaching purposes. In short, this book provides an excellent resource for students and is a very enjoyable read. I definitely recommend it for students of medicine, nursing and the biological sciences and for health professionals. I would also recommend it for those without a scientific background who are interested in the social and ethical issues that arise in human genetics, such as philosophers, social scientists and indeed any interested reader willing to engage with the topic. Previous knowledge of genetics is not required.

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