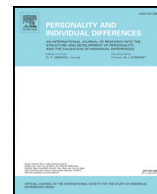




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Book Review

Twin Mythconceptions, N.L. Segal, False beliefs, fables, and facts about twins, 2017 Academic Press, London, UK, 2017, (309 pp. Soft-cover. ISBN978-0-12-803994-6)

The dedication of Nancy Segal's new book, "*Twin Mythconceptions*" sets the stage for the balanced perspectives and well investigated explanations of twin research. The author dedicates the book to twins and triplets and states that they "do so much more for science just by being themselves" (p. v). The dedication concludes with a thank you to the author's late parents "who raised my twin sister and me with fair-mindedness and foresight" (p. v). These two statements almost form the theme of this book as research findings with twins is explained which, from a psychology of science perspective, is partially explained by the personal characteristics of the author.

The first chapter of the book provides an overview of the biological mechanisms underlying twin creation which is supplemented by a definition of terms in Appendix 5, an explanation of twinning rates in Appendix 1, and an explanation of polar bodies (cells from meiosis) in Appendix 3. Chapter 2 describes the models used to analyze twin data and includes a discussion of virtual twins (adopted siblings who are not genetically related but who are the same age and live together). The following 10 chapters have a unique design in that statements or beliefs or "Mythconceptions" are discussed in the first person narrative. Each statement is followed by a "reality check" such that each statement is deemed to be true or false (or likely versus unlikely), an explanation under the heading "short answer", and concludes with a section labelled, "more of the story". For example, Chapter 10, "Good Twin-Evil Twin and Other Family Ties" clarifies that although literary outlets suggest otherwise, there is not a twin within the pair who is better than their co-twin, but that parents of identical twins may "exaggerate twins' minor differences" (p. 210). Following a brief example of how

the author differs from her fraternal co-twin sister, the research findings for antisocial personality disorder and prosocial behaviour are discussed. This balance of story and academic review provides an excellent mix.

The final chapter (Chapter 13) is a summary of the field of twin studies from early research to modern day gene studies. The history section of the chapter is supplemented by Appendix 4 which lists the author's recommended "classic" twin research publications. The book concludes with the five appendices. Appendix 1 reviews Hellin-Zeleny's law of twinning rates (as introduced in Chapter 1) and concludes that the law is "possibly" true as well as Weinberg's differential rate which further explains the frequency of twins. Appendix 2 provides a questionnaire to assess handedness and Appendix 3 reviews polar bodies (to supplement Chapter 1). Appendix 4 is the "classic" twin reading list and Appendix 5 is the helpful glossary and definition of terms and abbreviations used throughout the text.

In conclusion, this book proves an in depth look into twin research findings. The writing style is easily accessible and the first person narratives provide a personal touch to the content. This balance of story and academic review provides an excellent mix.

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