NOTICES

European Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Pamplona, Spain, 20–22 November 1997 (including the 9th Health Services Research Conference and the Spanish Public Health and Health Management meetings). For further information contact: Idoia Gaminde, Facultad de Economicas, Universidad Publica de Navarra, Campus de Arrosadia 31006 Pamplona, Spain. Tel: +34 48 169420. Fax: +34 48 169404. Email: EUPHA-SESPAS@upna.es. For updated information about the programme, visit the web page: <http://animal.upna.es/economia/eupha>.

Cornerstones for Mental Health: The 1997 World Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health, 6–11 July 1997, Lahti and Helsinki, Finland. For more information, contact: KaKo Congress Services, "Cornerstones", PO Box 762, FIN-00101 Helsinki, Finland. Fax: +358 9 492 810. Email: kako_ar@cc.helsinki.fi.

BOOK REVIEWS

Epidemiological studies: a practical guide. By Alan J Silman. (Pp 175; £14.95 pbk; £40.00 hbk). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-521-43979-5 (pbk), 0-521-43371-1 (hbk).

This introductory text was written originally for trainee public health physicians as a guide to the undertaking of simple epidemiological (largely field) studies. It is admirable for this purpose and has strong sections on study design, questionnaire design, and development, data analysis and interpretation, ethical issues, and project costings. There are many worked examples and the section on the validity of information and the reproducibility of measurements are particularly useful to anyone setting up a survey. This text therefore will be useful to a wide range of individuals including hospital specialists and general practitioners.

The book more than adequately fulfils its title and contains a wealth of important practical hints on designing and running surveys. As a stand-alone text for epidemiology and public health, however, there are some gaps – notably on the analysis of routine data, health services research, screening, and clinical trials. The book is presently unreferenced but this may be rectified in future editions.

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The role of general practice in maternity care. Report of Royal College of General Practitioners Maternity Care Group. (Occasional Paper 72) (Pp 14; £11.00). London: Royal College of General Practitioners, 1995. ISBN 0-85084-218-2.

Maternity care has, in recent decades, become something of a cockpit. A growing con-

sciousness of the influence of health factors in pregnancy, the medicalisation of childbirth, the rise of feminist sociology, and the voices of an articulate mass of pregnant and parturating women, have made it a noisy arena. Obstetricians and gynaecologists are divided between defending their hospital citadels and yielding to the siren voices outside; patients want both the security of good medical care and the comforts of home; militant midwives and health visitors strive to preserve and expand their hard-won roles. Caught between all these pressures, the GPs, in this brief paper, fight their corner. They want obstetric training to move from its hospital base out into the community, emphasising the relative "normality" of most pregnancies; closer collaboration with midwives and greater attention to the quality of care. They are quiet over pay (one possible reason why GP-midwife units are declining), and differences within their own ranks. Do they really speak with one voice?

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Human energetics in biological anthropology. Stanley J Ulijaszek. (Pp235; £35.00; US\$54.95). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-521-43295-2.

The fundamentals of life involve the conversion of food into body, energy, and ultimately children. This book explores the anatomical and physiological limitations placed on this process by the human condition and the development of diversity in human energetics in order to adapt to the varying ecologies occupied by different populations.

Ulijaszek's study of this process is thorough, with comprehensive coverage of the literature, making the text a useful reference tool for the specialist student and academic. The more casual reader may wish to skip through the first half of the book which deals in extensive detail with basics of adaptation, evolution, and methodology in measuring and modelling energy flow through human populations. However, those who persevere with this first half will be rewarded with an excellent summary of the human adaptive process but firmly returned to earth with the detailed practicalities of the scientific methods involved in researching this field.

In the second half, the pace accelerates as the author unravels the relationship between the availability of energy and the development of the reproductive process, the physical stature of different populations, and even the structure of societies. Here, covering aspects of developing and developed countries, Ulijaszek explores concepts useful to anthropologist, ecologist, and health professional.

The author provides all the necessary information to conclude with a discussion of what such an anthropological approach has achieved and where such research may progress. Unfortunately, however, the book finishes abruptly instead, leaving the reader without any real sense of direction. This ex-

cepted, it is a comprehensive and at times captivating review of a whole field of research.

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Diet and Cancer: Markers, Prevention and Treatment (Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology Volume 354). Edited by Maryce M Jacobs. (Pp 256; \$79.50). New York and London: Plenum Press, 1994. ISBN 0 306 447 231

This volume is the proceedings of a conference on nutrition and cancer held in 1992. It is heavily biochemical, but a smattering of epidemiological research is included. It provides details of possible mechanisms for nutrients causing or preventing cancer. Of particular interest to epidemiologists would be chapters 4–6, which describe possibilities for the development of biological markers for cancer risk. Chapter 4 also contains an interesting discussion of the difficulties in addressing racial/ethnic differences in diet and cancer. Chapters 8 and 9 describe the possible protective effects of consuming garlic and green tea, mainly using rat studies as examples. Chapter 10 covers the possibility of soybean containing foods reducing the risk of breast and prostate cancer due to their isoflavone content. Chapter 11 is an excellent example of a "molecular epidemiological" approach, it integrates exposure measurements with epidemiological studies. The chapter uses aflatoxin excretion in the urine as a marker for human liver cancer. The last four chapters consider nutritional problems and support in the treatment of cancer.

This is not a book to browse through at bedtime, but it could be a useful reference for researchers working in the field of nutrition and cancer.

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Tobacco and Health. Karen Slama (Ed). (Pp 1039; \$US175.00). New York: Plenum Press, 1995. ISBN 0-306-45111-5.

"The world over, tobacco manufacturers and merchants put their own financial interests before the health and lives of the thousand million consumers to whom they sell their products."

So said Hiroshi Nakajima in his opening address to the 9th World Conference on Tobacco and Health in Paris in 1994. It was a recurring theme, together with three worrying trends: the persistent excessive consumption by young people; the growth in women's smoking; and the spread of smoking to developing countries and central and eastern Europe.

This book is the conference proceedings and consists of over 200 individual contributions documenting the current position in the battle against the tobacco barons. Contributions range from analysis of the devastating health effects, through prevalence surveys to describing and evaluating the growing repertoire of interventions to reduce uptake and promote cessation. It is a large and expensive book and will probably appeal most to librarians and specialists. It will certainly