an outline of a new theory of behavioural change, which, the authors claim, overcomes the inadequacies of earlier models.

Anyone with a feeling that there may be a degree of ambiguity in the title of this publication can be reassured at this point. For in this book there is a relatively free interchange between the use of Public Health (the discipline) and public health (the health of the public). This book is about changing both. If Public Health is to improve the health of the public, it must adopt a broader approach by promoting the consideration of health by policy makers outside the field of Public Health as well as within. In order to do this, the authors argue that much research is needed which must be supported by appropriate funding policies.

This book is well set out and comprehensively referenced and indexed. It contains a wealth of information which will interest students and workers in the social and behavioural sciences, public health and health promotion. I do not feel, however, that it will reach the wider audience for which it is intended. Multiple authorship has led to a variety of styles, some readable, others sadly not. There is obscure word usage and unnecessary jargon in many places which does little to demystify the subject. In addition, there are other barriers which may well make this book inaccessible: there is much criticism of the Public Health “establishment”. This is especially evident in the early chapters and if the readers are antagonised at this stage, the messages which should make this book a valuable contribution to the development of a New Public Health will surely be lost.

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This is the report of the Select Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe. It sets out to consider the various methods of preventive screening for early signs of disease, defects or risk factors in adults and to evaluate their efficiency, effectiveness and social feasibility.

In the opening chapter, the definition, objectives, and characteristics of preventive screening are unambiguously clarified. The implications for evaluation of screening are specified. The questions and criteria applied in the evaluation of preventive screening and of screening tests are listed and briefly...
explained. A detailed exposition of the levels of economic evaluation is given. The components of evaluation are succinctly summarised in the form of an evaluation protocol.

In the subsequent chapters, the book reviews screening for a whole range of specific diseases and conditions; infective and parasitic diseases, neoplasms, diabetes, diseases of blood, behavioural disorders, glaucoma, cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases, congenital anomalies, disorders of the elderly and multiphasic screening. Evaluation of screening for each disease or condition is briefly summarised, followed by a clear and authoritative statement of recommendations.

The book is well written and easy to follow, but its presentation could have been better. I would have liked a concise table synthesising the recommendations and guiding the reader to the salient points.

A book of this size could not be expected to answer all the less common questions and cannot be used uncritically as a full review, but should be seen as a good, brief guide to preventive screening and will be of value and interest to all those interested in the subject. The opening chapter of the book is essential reading to all practitioners and students of public health.

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SHORT REVIEWS


The epidemic of books on AIDS almost matches that of the disease. This latest from the Institute of Medicine in the United States is an update of Confronting AIDS: Directions for public health, health care, and research which was published in 1986 and provided a comprehensive assessment of what was known about AIDS at that time. About 60 correspondents contributed material to the 1988 update which covers a wide spectrum of topics including the epidemiology and biology of HIV, prevention, medical care, and research needs. A committee at the Institute of Medicine has synthesised this material into a readable and well referenced text which includes recommendations for the future control of the disease.


This is a technical report describing the scientific rationale supporting the selection of new weight guidelines for Canadian adults. It includes the reasons why new guidelines were needed, the process in selecting the body mass index (BMI) and waist-hip ratio (WHR) as indicators, epidemiological reviews of weight surveys, including those based on Canadian data, and recommendations for implementation of the guidelines for healthy weights. This report will be of interest to those concerned with weight and fitness surveys and health promotion. Another document, Promoting healthy weights: A discussion paper, has been published in parallel with the technical report with the aim of informing the Canadian public about the problems of weight and of presenting a strategic framework for promoting healthy weights.