

menopause, and coital behaviour. The next section examines major causes of infertility, followed by two sections reviewing fecundity and what studies of assisted conception have revealed about its biological determinants. It is a pity that demographic work on patterns of infertility in Africa could not have been juxtaposed here.

This is followed by a section on the causes and frequency of fetal loss. Wilcox *et al* and Baird *et al*'s papers relate new methodological developments for studying very early fetal loss, demonstrating the importance of studying the relationship between this reproductive outcome and, for example, reduced fecundity.

The final and longest section reviews lack of fecundity post partum, and its determinants, especially lactation and nutrition. This is perhaps the most interesting and well developed area of convergence between biological scientist, epidemiologist, and demographer and all are represented among the papers in this section. Contributions by Gray *et al* and Etienne and Francine van de Walle serve to remind us of the complexity which is caused by heterogeneity in both biology and behaviour.

The book is well organised, although there is inevitable difficulty classifying some of the contributions where material overlaps several sections, and some repetition.

Although some results reported in this volume have appeared in specialist journals, this book collects these wide ranging contributions under one cover. It provides the non-demographer with easy access to important demographic research in an understandable form and gives researchers in all 3 fields access to major subject reviews (a service to the student and researchers coming new to the field) and a compendium of reasonably current knowledge for those who want to keep abreast of research developments.

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**Statistical Models in Epidemiology.** David Clayton and Michael Hills. (Pp 367; hbk £30.00) Oxford University Press, Oxford: 1993. ISBN 0-19-852221-5.

This book is aimed at epidemiologists who wish to secure a firm grasp of the statistical bases of their discipline's tools yet lack the confidence to tackle works intended for professional statisticians. The concept of the probability model is taken as the unifying principle. Probability models are linked to data through the notion of *likelihood*, which is an extremely important concept of statistics infrequently mentioned in elementary courses.

In developing the probability models the authors have a subtext, which is to proselytise the use of the concept of *likelihood support* which they claim leads to a better and more intuitive method of inference than that provided by traditional probabilistic ideas (eg *frequentist* confidence intervals). They show how *likelihood support* connects to the more widely known frequentist and Bayesian theories. Incidentally, if the concept of support is not too your taste, this in no manner invalidates the usefulness of the book.

The book covers statistical methods pertinent to all the study designs commonly encountered in epidemiology. Without needing to go beyond knowledge of logarithms and simple algebraic manipulation, the reader is led toward a thorough understanding of techniques as diverse as Mantel-Haenszel estimation, conditional logistic regression, and Cox's regression method for survival data. The important point is that having completed the book the reader should grasp the essential unity of the statistical approach. Moreover, along the way the reader will have encountered many quite deep ideas which are of great relevance to the interpretation of epidemiological data but are not readily accessible elsewhere.

This is an excellent book which can be strongly recommended to anyone who has some prior knowledge of epidemiological methods; it would well complement an intermediate or advanced course in epidemiology. Despite employing elementary mathematics it is a demanding book requiring considerable concentration from the reader. This is a consequence of the subject matter and not of any failing in the author's powers of presentation.

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## NOTICES

**International Course "Modern Epidemiology"**, 15-18 May, in Lunteren, The Netherlands. Topics will be: case-control research principles, interaction in aetiology, statistics vs epidemiologic analyses. Further information: Mrs A van Alst, Course Secretary, Department of Epidemiology, University of Nijmegen, PO Box 9101, 6500 HB Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 80 619132; fax: +31 80 613505.

**First International Conference on Epidemiology, Causes and Prevention of Skin Diseases**, 25-27 May 1995, Marseille, France. Further information: ECPDS, Service de Dermatologie, Hôpital Sainte-Marguerite, 270 Bd de Ste Marguerite, BP 29, 13277 Marseille (Cedex 9), France. Fax: +33 91 74 47 81.

**Annual Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology and the International Society for Exposure Analysis**, 30 August-1 September 1995, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands. Further information: Ms S Peelen, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Wageningen, PO Box 238, 6700 AE Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 8370 84124; fax: +31 8370 82782; e-mail: susan.peelen@medew.hegl.wau.nl.

**Epidemiology in Occupational Health** (11th International Symposium), 5-8 September 1995, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands. Further information: Ms S Peelen, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Wageningen, PO Box 238, 6700 AE Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 8370 84124; fax: +31 8370 82782; e-mail: susan.peelen@medew.hegl.wau.nl.

**Fourth Meeting of the British Epidermo-Epidemiology Society (BEES)**, 20 January 1995, Nottingham. BEES was established to promote epidemiological research into all forms of skin disease, with emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach. For further information contact: Melanie Bowesman, Secretary to Dr Hywel Williams, Department of Dermatology, C Floor, South Block, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham NG7 2UH. Tel: 0115 942 1421. Fax: 0115 970 9003.

## SHORT REVIEWS

**Caring for Health: History and Diversity.** Ed C Webster. (Pp 224; £12.99) Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1993. ISBN 0-335-19118-5.

Considers the development of health care from 1500 onwards. Argues that the strength and limitations of health systems in different countries are only understandable in terms of their evolution from past practices and structures, many of which are difficult to change.

**Environment Change and Human Health.** A CIBA Foundation Symposium jointly with the European Environmental Research Organisation. Ed J V Lake, G R Bock and K Ackrill. (Pp 274; price not stated.) Chichester: John Wiley, 1993. ISBN 0-471-93842-4.

These conference proceedings look at the effect upon human health of environmental changes such as climate, sea level, and chemical pollution of air, water, and soil.

**International Health: A North-South Debate.** Eds J R Ferreira, C Godue and M I Rodriguez. (Pp 259; price not stated.) Washington: Pan American Health Organisation, 1992. ISBN 92-75-12081-1.

The implication of the major health challenges in the Americas for training international health workers, the experiences in training such workers, and also the concept of international health and guidelines for future work are reviewed.

**London After Tomlinson: Reorganising Big City Medicine.** Ed J Smith. (Pp 127; £8.95.) London: BMJ Publishing Group, 1993. ISBN 0-7279-0783-2.

The Tomlinson Report proposed radical changes in health services, medical education and research in London which have a bearing on such provisions in many other large cities both in the United Kingdom and other developed countries. Concentrating specialist services in fewer units, rationalising acute beds and hospitals and investing in primary and community care are recommended.