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 demographers are so often sidetracked by patterns of infertility in Africa could not have been juxtaposed here.

This is followed by a section on the causes and treatments. 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 to the 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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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 frequent model. The book is accessible than that provided by traditional probabilistic ideas (eg frequentist confidence intervals). They show how likelihood support connects to the more widely used frequentistic work on patterns 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 Mentel-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 active 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.

A S T L E G E R
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Fourth Meeting of the British Epidermomo-
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 in-
formation contact: Melanie Bowesman, Sec-
retary 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 Diver-

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.


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 Course “Modern Epidemiology”, 15–18 May, in Lunteren, The Netherlands. Topics will be: case-control research principles, interaction in aetiology, statistics vs epidemiological analyses. Further information: Mrs A van Alst, Course Sec-
retary, Department of Epidemiology, Uni-
versity of Nijmegen, PO Box 9101, 6500 HB
Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 80 619133; fax: +31 80 613505.

First International Conference on Epidemiology, Causes and Prevention of Skin Diseases, 25–27 May 1995, Marseille, France. Further information: SCPSD, Serv-
ce de dermatologie, Hôpital Sainte-Mar-
guerie, 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 Ex-
posure Analysis, 30 August–1 September 1995, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands. Further information: Ms S Peelen, De-
partment of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Wageningen, PO Box 238, 6700 AE Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 8370 84124; fax: +31 8370 82872; e-mail: susan.peelen@medew.heg.wau.nl.

Epidemiology in Occupational Health (11th International Symposium), 5–6 Sep-
tember 1995, Noordwijkerhout, The Neth-
erlands. 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 82872; e-mail: susan.peelen@medew.heg.wau.nl.

International Health: A North–South Debate. Eds J R Ferreira, C Codue and M I Rodriguez. (Pp 259; price not stated.) Wash-

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.


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.

The design of national health policies to combat rapidly increasing costs and limited access to health care by drawing on American, Canadian, and British experience are discussed. Proposals to reform the US health care system are assessed.


Considers the current issues relating to funding the organisation and delivery of health care in the United Kingdom and providing a service that will, at the same time, prevent and treat disease, be cost effective, deliver services equitably, and be user friendly.


This volume considers the methodological basis of population health research and provides a critical assessment of theoretical issues affecting the quality of research. It demonstrates the value of theory guided, multimethod approaches for research in this area, and looks at the appropriate analytical models as mechanisms for building theoretical knowledge.


Considers the practical use of health economics and reports recent results of general importance to policy makers for improving the efficiency and equity of resource use in the developing world.


Presents UK statistics to indicate the current pattern of health and illness among children and teenagers. Changes in recent years, factors influencing health and geographical, sexual, ethnic, and social differences are examined.


This book reviews the scientific debate that has taken place over the last 10 years precipitated by the reporting of cases of leukaemia in the vicinity of the Sellafield nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the UK. In addition to the commentary, key papers are reproduced as well as correspondence from the UK and abroad and extracts from official monitoring reports.


With each chapter containing a list of specific learning objectives, this publication considers disease mechanisms, the study of disease clusters, and surveillance techniques. Emphasis is placed on exposure monitoring, the use of biomarkers in epidemiology studies, laboratory practices for environmental sampling, risk assessment, risk management, and environmental law.


Presents the background papers in full for the nine reports commissioned by the study to look at the life, work and livelihood of the many people in the UK who have finished their main job or career and completed the raising of their families but have 20 or more years of healthy active life ahead of them. The main features of health and function were examined and the need for policy and service developments considered.

PETER GRIME