Original articles
Insulin-treated diabetic patients’ use of, experience of and attitudes to diabetes care. C M Gálvez, F G Lüthe
Determinants of condom use among intravenous drug users in Spain. I Ruiz, I Hernández-Aguado, M Rebagliato, M J Aviño, S Perea-Hoyo, M García de la Hera, P Bolímar
Additive scoring of reported symptoms: validity and item bias problems in morbidity scales. K Dean, S Edvardson
Effects of health claims on eating habits of the Dutch population. P van Assema, K Glans, J Brug, G Koh

Short reports
Smoking and female reproduction: comparison of smoking habits of the pre-pregnant and the general female population, Norway 1989. E Wegeland, K Strand, T Bjerkedal

Book reviews
Calendar of events
European Public Health Association
Index Volume 6 1996
The Health of Populations in a Changing Europe, IEA European Meeting, 3-6 September 1997, Münster, Germany. Second announcement of call for abstracts. Further information: Scientific Secretariat, Universität Münster, Institut für Epidemiologie und Sozialmedizin, D-48129 Münster, Domagkstrasse 3. Tel: +49 (0) 2 51 83 5396. Fax: +49 (0) 2 51 83 5300. email: hense@uni-muenster.de

BOOK REVIEWS

Statistics at Square One
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Variations in health are now official.1 As social scientists know, geographical variations exist in most domains of life. Mapping these variations is fascinating.

In this book, conventional equal land area maps are replaced by equal population cartograms, distortion the familiar outline of Britain to a square format, and compressing huge amounts of data into instantly visible information. The data used are generally routinely available. The topics covered in the seven chapters are wide ranging, even if the data used are necessarily selected.

Population includes population change, census imputation, and population density; demography includes fertility, ethnicity, country of origin; economic includes employment status, industrial structure, early retirement; housing includes overcrowding, tenure, negative equity; health includes long term illness, mortality over 50 years; society includes households and families, changes in care availability, dependency, and politics, the final chapter, includes party specific voting patterns, abating, and the 50 most marginal constituencies. There are detailed index maps, naming all wards, local authorities, and parliamentary constituencies. Maps and cartograms introduced and are often accompanied by graphs. The text elucidates the main messages from the dense compression represented in all the illustrations, and, at the end of each chapter, provides useful references both to the source data and to other authors, specialists in the relevant topic. There is no attempt at causal interpretation. There is, however, sufficient detail and for others to explore aetiological relationships, and develop their own hypotheses.

The author has worked with a variety of data, all treated uniquely, but ultimately mapped using a standard school program. At 35.00 this book represents good value for money. Epidemiologists, social scientists, geographers at any level of training or seniority will find here imaginative ways of representing data which are informative and stimulating.

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No woman can be too rich or too thin.2 Anorexia or compulsive starvation is based on distaste of body size and fear of gaining weight. Approximately 3% of all young women in the UK are believed to suffering ill health through eating disorders, although classification and under-reporting make more accurate assessment difficult. Anorexia typically develops gradually with physical symptoms, including dizzy spells, constipation, swelling of the stomach and face, loss of menstruation (amenorrhoea), reduction in less important functions such as thyroid, respiratory and blood pressure activity, and slowing down of the basal metabolic rate. Long term damage may include heart failure and decreased bone density.

While opinions about the cause and treatment of anorexia, anorexia is increasing. It is therefore urgent that health professionals can recognise the signs and understand the causes. This book is aimed at the popular market, and is available widely in the high street, so I was somewhat sceptical as to its relevance, both to readers of this journal and health professionals in general. However, the author, achieves credibility with a compelling account, demonstrating the complexity of anorexia and eating disorders generally.

The book proved to be informative and useful. It covers perspectives of anorexia widely, and provides a handy reference list of sources of help, advice lines and helpline numbers. Part three, in my opinion the most useful, helps the reader or carer to look beyond the eating behaviour and to explore the real problems and causes of the disease. It identifies the problems teenagers face daily and by acknowledging these and dealing with them rather than focusing on the eating, shows that progress is possible. In a therapeutic situation it could be used to promote discussion between health professional and young patient. At the least it could prevent misinterpretation or trivialisation of an issue more profound than slimming and more common than we think.

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