

BOOK REIWEW

Ethic Factors in Health and Disease

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Butterworth Heinemann (Paper Back Ed. 1994)

This book is treatise of contributions by scientists from various countries examining ethnicity, sociology and disease patterns.

Migration, life style changes and health status of various populations are viewed from aspects of epidemiology in some detail. Contributions to disease understanding by molecular genetics, changes in environment, nutritional influences and specific risk factors for different diseases are brought out in the various chapters.

Geographical distribution, parental diagnosis and counselling aspects of various molecular genetic disorders like sickle cell disease, thalassemia, haemoglobinopathies and G-6PD deficiency are discussed. In transitional epidemiology, site-specific differential for gastrointestinal caners, breast cancer, prostate cancer and lung cancer amongst different populations are described. Relationship of cardiovascular diseases including hypertension and diabetes mellitus to changes in environment, nutrition and life style in countries of adoption are elaborated. Impact of social inequality on housing conditions, risk of mental illness and utilization of health care facilities are presented.

The legacy of nutritional infectious diseases seems not as much borne of race but relates more to environmental and economic factors.

In the present scenario of movements of population from one part of the globe to another with polygenic backdrop of many chronic diseases where in a new life style is being adopted, molecular biology and biochemical alterations are unraveling the pathogenesis of chronic diseases which are taking maximum toll of life, specially amongst the recent entrants to the developed world. The first few sections examine the background issues with some epidemiological and social aspects of the migrant populations. The remaining two thirds of the book examines specific problems relating to nutrition, infections, haematological disorders, psychiatric illness, cardiovascular disorders and diabetes.

The book is written not only for clinicians working amongst such population groups but also for the community workers as it covers the public health aspects of the disease under discussion. Authors should have addressed themselves on questions as reasons for lack of cultural assimilation, reasons for increased vulnerability to metabolic disorders and atherosclerosis and a higher magnitude of loss of life in migrant populations than existing in the host country. Further scope of interventional studies with regard to 'life style disease' as being now evaluated in developed countries is not stated. This book serves as a good source for references on various studies carried on the migrant population in the last 3 decades or so.

R.G.N.