

## Book reviews

**The Quest for Food. Its Role in Human Evolution and Migration.** By Ivan Crowe. Pp. 258. (Tempus Publishing Ltd, Stroud, 2000.) £16.99, ISBN 0-7524-1462-3, hardback.

DOI: 10.1017/S0021932004215528

This book is monumental in ambition; in it the author attempts to present the entire evolutionary history of food and its acquisition by drawing on the extensive literature on this topic within the disciplines of archaeology, evolutionary biology, anthropology, primatology and human ecology. It is not quite clear who this book is meant for; while it is clearly at a level appropriate for 6th form students and non-specialists, its size and comprehensiveness puts it outside the range of usual popular scientific accounts of the human condition. The author is a non-specialist and school-teacher with a passion for his subject matter, and to his credit has produced a very readable account of this aspect of human evolution and prehistory. He has consulted widely among the great and the good in academia, and feedback from international experts in appropriate areas has gone a long way to ensure the scientific validity of most of his assertions.

The volume consists of three parts, the first of which is concerned with human origins, and is called 'African Genesis'. Within this there are four chapters, the first of which considers primates and the diversity of primate diets. The second considers hominid evolution and hominid foraging patterns and diet. The third considers dietary variation in the context of the emergence of *Homo erectus*, while the fourth considers foraging and diet in the context of new ecological challenges associated with climate change in Africa, and migrations out of Africa. The second part is called 'New Lands', and the two chapters therein consider the colonization of new lands by humans, and the different types of adaptation that would have been needed to live successfully in more marginal, non-tropical places, respectively. The third part is called 'The Old World', and in four chapters considers the following issues: human settlement in the Palaeolithic period; domestication of plant and animal species; urbanization; and the emergence of cities along with increased economic and technological complexity. In all three sections, broad-brush accounts of food and humanity are painted, with useful and appropriate examples placed throughout the text, keeping it interesting and lively. There are some annoying typographical errors, and the author makes bold assertions in places where more caution might be warranted. Despite these drawbacks, the book is a worthy addition to the body of works on food and humanity.

STANLEY J. ULJASZEK  
*University of Oxford and St Cross College*

**Measuring Disease: A Review of Disease Specific Quality of Life Measurement Scales.**

By Ann Bowling. Pp. 420. (Open University Press, Buckingham, 2001.) £25.00, ISBN 0-335-20641-7, paperback.

DOI: 10.1017/S0021932004225524

A book entitled *Measuring Disease: A Review of Disease Specific Quality of Life Measurement Scales* leaves the prospective reader in scant doubt of its content. That the first edition of the book (1995) was reprinted in each of the three subsequent years suggests an appeal that is broader than one might expect on first look. The revamped second edition, which in its nine additional pages provides updates and additional quality of life measurement scales, should do at least as well as did the first.

The first chapter has been extensively re-written, updating the review of literature and providing greater clarity to our understanding of what is and, as importantly, what is not encompassed in the term 'quality of life'. The chapter charts clearly and thoroughly the historical development of assessment scales that attempt to measure the effectiveness of an intervention. The chapter also provides an excellent discussion of the differing approaches to the determination of 'quality of life'; of particular interest are the cautionary examples of discrepancies between the doctor's and the patient's assessment of the same condition.

In subsequent chapters measurement scales are organized by the nature of the condition being assessed. These include cancers, psychiatric conditions and psychological morbidity (the longest chapter by far), respiratory conditions, neurological conditions, rheumatological conditions, cardiovascular disease, and other disease- and condition-specific scales. Each chapter is introduced with a useful explanation of the particular challenges faced in the development of quality of life scales for the condition. Scales commonly used (and sometimes not so commonly used) in assessment are then presented. Each scale is well described, giving the uses of the test, how it was developed, its basic structure, and any tests of reliability and validity that have been conducted. The author addresses concerns or shortfalls in the design of the scale fully and fairly, or so it seems to me at least. Within an overall unity of approach, each chapter emphasizes the most important aspects of the task of creating a measurement scale that is specific to the condition being examined. Readers seeking further information or distribution details on any of the scales will find a comprehensive contact list in the appendix.

While most scales are designed to measure the change in a condition along a scale from some degree of pathology or disability to some level of normality, we are reminded that not all conditions are bi-directional. In some the purpose of an intervention is not to 'cure', but to stabilize, mitigate or palliate the effects of the condition on the patient's quality of life.

While the book will have immediate utility for those whose daily work requires the assessment of the perception of change in a medical condition, it will also be a useful reference for those who want to gain a broad overview of the health, social and psychological factors that determine quality of life.

KEN PORTER  
*Merton College, Oxford*

**Patterns of Human Growth. Second Edition.** By Barry Bogin. Pp. 455. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.) £24.95, ISBN 0-521-56438-7, paperback.

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This book, written by a well-known author in biological anthropology, presents a second, totally revised and updated edition of the first volume published under the same title by the same publishers in 1988. In the 11 years separating those two volumes, the present edition has not only doubled in size (455 pp. versus 267 pp.) but also substantially changed its structure and accent. It synthesizes a vast body of information on human growth – methods, theories, experimental research results – and considers it in evolutionary perspective. The book has now eight instead of seven chapters, and their contents, if not completely new, have been sufficiently enlarged, revised and renewed.

The second edition, like the first one, also starts with an introduction (Introductory Remarks), which contains several short subchapters explaining the links between anthropology and growth; the biocultural nature of human growth as demonstrated by the author's own research in Guatemala; evolutionary perspectives on growth; a short synopsis of growth theory; the definition of the term 'auxology'; and, finally, some comments on the organization of the book.

Chapter 1 – 'Background to the study of human growth' – starts with definitions of the terms 'growth', 'development' and 'maturation' and with an explanation of why all living things need to grow. The rest of the chapter deals with the history of growth studies from prehistory until the late 20th century. This information is very condensed, beautifully illustrated and well organized. As is stated by the author, the chapter 'highlights some advances in the study of human growth' (p. 53), so one cannot and should not expect a 'concise history on growth' for all times and countries.

The second chapter is called 'Basic principles of human growth'. In the first edition, this was the title of the first chapter, which also included a brief history of growth studies. Events (stages) of the human life cycle – prenatal and postnatal – are listed in a table (p. 55), and later discussed at great length. Instead of the 'Early', 'Middle' and 'Later Childhood' of the first edition, Bogin presents such stages as 'Childhood', 'Juvenility' and 'Puberty', giving them interesting and important definitions. Adulthood events are also mentioned and described but only very briefly, which is fully understandable given that the focus of the book is human growth.

Evolutionary approaches to human growth are developed at length in Chapters 3 and 4, which certainly occupy the central part in the book. The author develops and refines his former ideas on the evolution of human childhood. He explains the unique pattern of human growth and its evolutionary significance. He also considers the stages of the human life cycle as biocultural adaptations increasing the reproductive success of the human species.

Chapter 5 deals with population differences in growth in living humans. Means for height, weight and weight/height ratio are given for several populations (p. 226), ranging between the tallest (Dutch) and the shortest (Efe Pygmy). Population differences in rate of growth are discussed, as well as variations in skeletal, dental and

sexual maturation; sexual dimorphism in growth and its possible mechanisms; hereditary and environmental factors as the causes of population variation, and other important topics, such as the secular trend and its determinants. The chapter ends with the very significant issue of the adaptive value of human body size. Bogin argues that short stature should be more likely 'associated with the social, economic and political environments that cause poverty ... than with "genetic adaptations"...' (p. 266).

Environmental factors influencing growth form the focus of the next chapter. Five categories are chosen for discussion: nutrition, altitude, climate, migration and modernization, and socioeconomic status. The author gives a very comprehensive overview of his own and other investigators' data within the framework of these factors.

Chapter 7 deals with genetic and endocrine mechanisms of human growth regulation. Some of the latest developments in molecular biology of growth, like homeobox genes, are discussed in an evolutionary context, which is the focal point of the book. Important data on correlations in growth between twins, biological relatives (non-twins), adopted children and adopted parents are given, as well as detailed information on various genetically induced abnormalities of growth and development. This chapter also contains a very well written account of the endocrinology of growth, and an important discussion of psychological influences on growth. Starting with the classical observation of E. Widdowson in post-war Germany, the author gives more examples of the impact of emotion on growth, which indicates that 'love' may be as important as 'food' (p. 384).

The last chapter (which in the previous edition was dedicated to mathematical and biological models of human growth) in the new book more interestingly recapitulates some of the facts and ideas discussed in the previous chapters. It gives a synthesis for the biocultural view of human growth as a 'recurring interaction between the biology of human development and the sociocultural environment' (p. 387).

In a short review it is hardly possible to mention all of the important subjects and ideas contained in this book. It comprises an extensive glossary, a huge list of references, a detailed index, and is illustrated with black-and-white pictures and diagrams. It is brilliantly written and very well organized. As a very useful source of current information on many aspects of human growth, it is a valuable addition to the literature on growth, a 'must have' book for every auxologist's library, a volume that anyone interested in biological anthropology should have the pleasure to read. The author may be sure that his work will bring new disciples to 'the field of human growth and development research', as is his hope for the future (p. 397).

ELENA GODINA

*Moscow State University*