Book Reviews

Essentials of Human Nutrition, 2nd ed, edited by Jim Mann and A Stewart Truswell, 2002, 662 pages, softcover, $54.50. Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Mann and Truswell have edited an internationally authored nutrition text designed as a student's introduction to nutrition and as a reference on basic nutrition and nutrition principles for physicians and other health professionals. Although the book contains many references to 2001 publications, some sections are noticeably outdated because of more recently published information. Specifically, the most recently updated information on growth rates and on height and body weight from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is not included in this book.

The book is divided into 8 parts. Part 1 contains basic information on macronutrients, including a chapter on alcohol. Part 2 covers organic and inorganic essential nutrients and finishes with a well-developed chapter on other biologically active substances in plant foods. Part 3 discusses nutrition-related disorders in its 100 pages, and it provides a brief introduction to obesity, protein-energy malnutrition, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and eating disorders. At the end of each of the chapters, 5–15 references for further reading are provided. A textbook style of writing, in which statements are not referenced, is used. Many of the chapters have wonderful diagrams that illustrate the main points therein.

Food toxicity and safety issues are covered in part 4. The components of nutritional assessment are covered in part 5, which contains especially good illustrations of landmarks for anthropometric measures. Part 6 contains chapters relating to life stages; it begins with a discussion of pregnancy and lactation and continues through the aging process. Sports nutrition is also covered in part 6. Some clinical and public health issues are covered in part 7, as are some aspects of nutrition counseling. Finally, the 3 chapters in part 8 include case studies in 3 topic areas: nutrition and poverty, enteral and parenteral nutrition, and functional foods.

This book is easy to read, uses the nutrition and health standards established by the World Health Organization, and is well indexed. It provides some useful, albeit basic, background information for health professionals.

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Child and Adolescent Obesity—Causes and Consequences, Prevention and Management, edited by Walter Burniat, Tim J Cole, Inge Lissau, and Elizabeth ME Poskitt, 2002, 436 pages, hardcover, $90. Cambridge University Press, New York.

This book reflects the experience of European scientists, most of them participants in the European Childhood Obesity Group, which for a number of years has been an important force in the field of pediatric obesity in Europe and elsewhere. Although several textbooks on obesity were published in recent years, few, if any, focused on child and adolescent obesity, and thus this volume is a welcome addition to the literature. The editors set an ambitious scope for their book, aiming to cover all aspects of child obesity, from etiology and mechanisms to prevention and treatment. For this book of relatively modest size (400 pages of text), they had to make some choices between depth and breadth of coverage.

The book is divided into 3 sections: *1*) Causes, *2*) Consequences, and 3) Prevention and Management. The Causes section includes 6 chapters, which focus on measurement, genetics, epidemiology, dietary factors, physical activity, and psychosocial factors. The chapter on measurement provides a good update on standardization of anthropometric techniques and selection of cutoff for the definition of obesity. There is, however, only limited consideration of the technical aspects of the different methods of body-composition measurement as they apply to a pediatric population. The chapter on physical activity provides a very good overview of the fundamentals of exercise physiology and energy balance, but it includes only a brief discussion of the role of physical activity in obesity and body-weight homeostasis.

The 5 chapters in the Consequences section describe the clinical manifestations of obesity, including endocrine disorders and genetic syndromes such as the Prader-Willi and Laurence-Moon syndromes. One chapter focuses on cardiovascular disease risk and includes discussion of body composition and fat patterning, which complements the corresponding chapter on measurement in the Causes section.

The last section, Prevention and Management, comprises 10 of the 21 chapters and almost one-half of the book's pages. Only one chapter in this section focuses on prevention. Each of the other chapters discusses a specific treatment approach, including diet, physical activity, drug therapy, surgery, psychotherapy, and ambulatory, home-based, and institutional approaches. These chapters are very informative and include useful bibliographies.

Although environmental issues are briefly discussed in several chapters, it would have been desirable for the editors to include a separate chapter focused on the social and cultural changes associated with the obesity epidemic. Factors such as fast-food and other out-of-home eating, television and other media, transportation, urban design, and the school environment are receiving increasing attention as potential targets for interventions to prevent child obesity.

In summary, this book is a useful compendium of the wide range of issues and disciplines related to pediatric obesity, presented from a European perspective. The book offers something for everyone, but health professionals working with obese children will find particularly useful the chapters on management and will benefit as well from the discussion of current issues relating to the causes, mechanisms, and assessment of child obesity.

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The Nutrition Transition: Diet and Disease in the Developing World, edited by Benjamin Caballero and Barry M Popkin, 2002, 276 pages, hardcover, $79.95. Academic Press, London.

How many books can claim the winner of a World Food Prize as the author of the foreword and a Nobel laureate in economics as the coauthor of the lead chapter? *The Nutrition Transition: Diet and Disease in the Developing World*, edited by Benjamin Caballero and Barry M Popkin, and the latest book in Academic Press's prestigious Food Science and Technology International Series, comes with these calling cards. The parent series contains pioneering textbooks on food technology covering topics such as sensory analysis, animal proteins, food engineering, food texture manipulation, food acceptance, and consumer research, dating back to 1965. Ironically, this latest contribution (only the second on human health issues in the series) places all of these technological advances—aimed at making food more abundant, more appealing, and more secure—in light of their potential downside for the health of individuals and populations. That is, the initiatives for making processed food sweeter, more tender, and more appetizing and appealing may be inciting (or at least enabling) the epidemic of diet-related maladies overtaking the world's population.

This is a difficult book to read; one may have to pick it up and set it down several times before getting into the broad, dense, and diverse subject matter. Legibility is one issue: the text print is fine, small, and tightly crammed over a highly glossy surface. The illustrations accompanying the text have even more minute lettering over backgrounds of various shades of blue. By contrast, the bold and beautiful color maps of the percentage of the national population living in urban areas in 1950 (inner back cover) and 2000 (inner back cover) enliven the book.

The term *nutrition transition*, introduced in 1994 by one of the book's coeditors (1), initially came to be defined by the realization that "problems of under- and overnutrition often coexist, reflecting the trend in which an increasing proportion of people consume the types of diets associated with a number of chronic diseases." The most salutary consequence of this formulation by Popkin was to legitimize over the past decade an intellectual and policy concern for linkages other than just undernutrition and development. The treatments of the nutrition transition are assorted and somewhat uneven. One can distill a basic "truism" that civilization with urbanization and globalization are factors in the paradoxical dilemma that confronts public health in developing countries.

The organizational scheme does not adequately align the contributions. The book contains an introductory chapter followed by 2 major sections: "The Global Context" (containing 4 chapters on economics of body size, food production, globalization, and demographic trends) and "Biological Factors Affecting the Nutrition Transition" (with 8 chapters on dietary transition, health consequence of early nutrition, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, a case study from China, a case study from Brazil, and policy implications). The most novel and interesting biological concepts are found in the first chapter of part I, whereas the final chapter of part II presents the most cogent discussion of the global context for interventions. Part II encompasses topics that go well beyond the biological factors affecting the nutrition transition. The thinking and writing is generally good throughout. The case studies are not written as review articles but rather as original research papers.

Truly superb and formidable crafting of the text is shown in the first chapter of part I on economics and technological development and their relations to body size and productivity and in the second chapter of part II on early nutrition and later risk of disease. Notably, the last 3 text pages of the book present the *Bellagio Declaration: Nutrition and Health Transition in the Developing World: The Time to Act*, a "manifesto" produced at a retreat of international intellectuals and academics held at Lake Como, Italy, in August, 2001.

Nutrition Transition does not bring us to a comprehensive consensus on the title topic but serves up a panoply of questions that provide a vibrant and challenging intellectual quality to the reading experience. For those, on the one hand, who like their blueprints neat and pat, this book is not for you. On the other hand, for those who seek to wrestle with paradoxes and dilemmas of food choice and eating behavior in the technological age of an urbanizing world with a globalizing food market where profound social inequalities continue to exist, then cover-to-cover reading of this compendium will put you into the center of the fray.

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