



Western Diseases: An Evolutionary Perspective (Cambridge Studies in Biological and Evolutionary Anthropology)

Tessa M. Pollard

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As a group, western diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, allergies and mental health problems constitute one of the major problems facing humans at the beginning of the 21st century, particularly as they extend into poorer countries. An evolutionary perspective has much to offer standard biomedical understandings of western diseases. At the heart of this approach is the notion that human evolution occurred in circumstances very different from the modern affluent western environment and that, as a consequence, human biology is not adapted to the contemporary western environment. Written with an anthropological perspective and aimed at advanced undergraduates and graduates taking courses in the ecology and evolution of disease, Tessa Pollard applies and extends this evolutionary perspective by analysing trends in rates of western diseases and providing a new synthesis of current understandings of evolutionary processes, and of the biology and epidemiology of disease.

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