

Water and Health in an Overcrowded World

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Water and Health in an Overcrowded World

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Water and Health in an Overcrowded World illuminates the ways in which urban and rural environments and living conditions affect human health, disease and disability in contrasting populations around the world. It looks widely, setting the health experience of contemporary societies in a rapidly urbanising world in the context of

human evolutionary history and human biology. The great majority of humans now live in an environment which is very different from that in which we evolved. We are still subject to the age-old selection pressures of infectious disease and interpersonal violence, but living in an overcrowded 'human zoo' is generating unprecedented sources of human disease and disability, such as pollution, traffic accidents, obesity, alcohol, tobacco and stress. An interactive DVD program models the evolution of one new threat: antibiotic resistant bacteria. The human zoo offers many benefits, but the costs to human health and happiness are considerable, as a review of some key global health statistic illustrates. The book concludes with a detailed case study of a scarce resource which is vital for human health: clean water. It considers the global water cycle, the uneven distribution and use of water between regions, and the impact of population growth, development and climate change on freshwater resources. More than a billion people worldwide are at risk from polluted drinking water and two and a half billion lack even the most basic sanitation. The consequences are illustrated by a discussion of water-borne diseases such as cholera, which cause millions of deaths every year. An interactive DVD using chemical models, video clips and photographs presents the chemistry of water at the molecular level and explains how compounds such as nitrates from fertilisers dissolve in it. This leads to an examination of water pollution by chemicals of human origin, including nitrates, mercury and endocrine disruptors. The authors conclude that the Earth's expanding human population is in a rapidly accelerating competition for water for irrigation, drinking and industrial processes, which threatens both human health and the preservation of biodiversity. The Online Resource Centre features: For lecturers who are registered adopters of the book: - Figures from the book in electronic format, available to download For students: Access to ROUTES, a searchable internet database of online resources compiled by academic staff and subject-specialist librarians.

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