

BOOK REVIEW

Title: NUTRITION, DIETETICS AND SPORT
Editors: G. Ricci and A. Venerando
Publisher: Edizioni Minerva Medica, Torino, Italy
 Price: \$38 270 pages References in most chapters.

This book records the Proceedings of the International Conference sponsored by Fondazione Sasso and held at Bordighera, Italy from 7 to 9 June 1976. This was the fourth conference in a series under the general title "Nutrition, dietetics and sport", hence the title for the book.

It contains the opening address by S. Cerquiglini and 34 original papers by authors from a variety of countries. In the introduction to the first paper by J. Stamler the author points out that scientific and social interest in sports and physical fitness has three origins: (1) traditional appreciation of the pleasures they afford, (2) fascination with the performance capacities of the human organism, and the abilities to extend these, particularly in competition, and (3) the concern, which has been growing continuously in recent decades, with the possibility that enhancement of physical fitness by sports and other means can be one important aspect of improved life style, for protection against the contemporary epidemic of premature heart attack. It is fitting that the organizers of the present conference should have brought together investigators concerned with all these aspects of sport in the modern world.

In the first paper, entitled 'Improving life styles to control the coronary epidemic', the author focusses on the research carried out over many years on the epidemiology, aetiology and prevention of epidemic coronary heart disease. Thus he implicates several aspects of modern life style as being specific in regard to the contemporary epidemic of premature coronary heart disease namely: 'rich' diet, cigarette smoking, physical inactivity, and psychosocial stresses. The widespread ingestion in industrialized countries of a diet high in cholesterol, saturated fat, salt and calories plays a key and essential role as the nutritional prerequisite for the common occurrence in the population of two of the major coronary risk factors, viz. hypercholestaemia and hypertension. These diet-related risk factors by themselves add greatly to susceptibility to premature heart attack. They also combine with cigarette smoking, a 20th Century habit still widely prevalent in the populations of the industrialized countries, to add insult to injury. After reviewing the roots of the epidemic of premature coronary heart disease, ways of improving life styles to control coronary risk factors are described, e.g. by effecting changes in habitual physical activity, and by controlling resting heart rates.

Other papers given at the Conference and reported in this book include two on the influence of exercise intervention on body weights. Another discusses sport in relation to the diabetic. A further paper considers the minimal requirement and ergogenic support of carbohydrate nutrition for human movement.

An investigation in which 200 mg vitamin C was added daily to the diet of 27 men demonstrated that there was no significant increase in performance as a result of the additional vitamin. The last paper is concerned with physical activity and diethylaminoethyl dextran. This is a preliminary study of its effects on a high fat diet. Results indicated a significant control of lipaemia in those subjects given the dextran.

The book will interest all those concerned with the influence of food and nutrition on physical performance. Unfortunately the book contains many spelling mistakes; these are irritating but do not, in general, prevent an understanding of the text. However, some papers have been poorly translated into English so it is sometimes difficult to understand the original author's meaning. There is a list of contents and an alphabetical list of authors, but no index of subjects.

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