



Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives: How Evolution Has Shaped Women's Health

Wenda Trevathan Ph.D.

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Winner of the 2011 W.W. Howells Book Award of the American Anthropological Association

How has bipedalism impacted human childbirth? Do PMS and postpartum depression have specific, maybe even beneficial, functions? These are only two of the many questions that specialists in evolutionary medicine seek to answer, and that anthropologist Wenda Trevathan addresses in *Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives*.

Exploring a range of women's health issues that may be viewed through an evolutionary lens, specifically focusing on reproduction, Trevathan delves into issues such as the medical consequences of early puberty in girls, the impact of migration, culture change, and poverty on reproductive health, and how fetal growth retardation affects health in later life. Hypothesizing that many of the health challenges faced by women today result from a mismatch between how their bodies have evolved and the contemporary environments in which modern humans live, Trevathan sheds light on the power and potential of examining the human life cycle from an evolutionary perspective, and how this could improve our understanding of women's health and our ability to confront health challenges in more creative, effective ways.

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