



# Evolution and Medicine

*Robert Perlman*

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## **Evolution and Medicine** Robert Perlman

Evolution and Medicine provides an accessible introduction to the new field of evolutionary medicine. Evolutionary concepts help explain why we remain vulnerable to disease, how pathogens and cancer cells evolve, and how the diseases that affected our evolutionary ancestors have shaped our biology.

The book interweaves the presentation of evolutionary principles with examples that illustrate how an evolutionary perspective enhances our understanding of disease. It discusses the theory of evolution by natural selection, the genetic basis of evolutionary change, evolutionary life history theory, and host-pathogen coevolution, and uses these concepts to provide new insights into diseases such as cystic fibrosis, cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, and malaria, incorporating the latest research in rapidly developing fields such as epigenetics and the study of the human microbiome. The book concludes with a discussion of the ways in which recent, culturally constructed changes in the human environment are increasing the prevalence of man-made diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, and are exacerbating socioeconomic disparities in health.

Just as evolutionary biology is concerned with populations and with changes in populations over time, evolutionary medicine is concerned with the health of populations. Evolution and Medicine emphasizes the role of demographic processes in evolution and disease, and stresses the importance of improving population health as a strategy for improving the health of individuals. This accessible text is written primarily for physicians, biomedical scientists, and both premedical and medical students, and will appeal to all readers with a background or interest in medicine.

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