

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-42925-2 - A Guide to Reproduction: Social Issues and Human Concerns

Irina Pollard

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The purpose of this comprehensive text is to increase awareness of human reproduction and its consequences. The central theme links reproductive capacity, the social consequences of the multiple stresses this places on the environment and the ways this relates back to the reproductive health of humans and other animals. In the first section, the biology of human reproduction is discussed, including such topics as the treatment and causes of infertility, growth and maturation, parental behaviour and neonate biology. The effects of procreational biology on the foundation of human social structure are also examined. The second part deals with reproduction as it relates to health and social issues such as stress, fertility control, AIDS, teratogens and errors of sexual differentiation. It is an invaluable resource for all those wishing to update their knowledge of human reproductive biology.

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A Guide to Reproduction
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Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1994

First published 1994

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Pollard, Irina.

A guide to reproduction : social issues and human concerns / Irina Pollard
p. cm.

ISBN 0-521-41862-3 (hardback) ISBN 0-521-42925-0 (pbk.)

1. Human reproduction. 2. Human reproduction – Social aspects.

3. Infertility. I. Title.

QP251.P65 1994

612.6 – dc20 93-38304 CIP

ISBN 0 521 41862 3 hardback

ISBN 0 521 42925 0 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 1999

KW

Cambridge University Press

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Preface and acknowledgements

The purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary text for science and medical students, and others wishing to up-date their knowledge of reproduction and related social issues. Because the book follows the content of the third year university biology course I teach, some background knowledge in animal physiology and biochemistry is assumed. The text is also intended to be thought provoking for those with little biological background who may be challenged to pursue the subject further. At the end of each chapter the General references section has sufficient documentation for the reader to find the source of most of what is discussed.

The 1980s have been an exciting decade in the reproductive sciences because of the substantial contributions which have come from all its subdisciplines. This is reflected in the overall structure of the book, which is aimed at an increased awareness of human reproductive issues and their consequences across disciplines. Theories and principles are integrated to create a holistic overview.

I especially owe a debt to Roger Hiller for critically reading all my drafts, for generously giving expert advice and for engaging in probing discussions throughout the gestation of this book. Roger's well-judged criticism resulted in important modifications and improvements, and his insistence on clarity of expression saved me from many blunders. I also owe a debt to David Pollard who read the entire manuscript and gave generously of his talents and time. Also, I extend my thanks to those colleagues who read and improved various chapters: Brian Atwell, Frank Burrows, Walter Ivantsoff, David Laing, Ian Pike and Michael Sinosich. I am indebted to Ron Oldfield and Jenny Norman for expertise in photography; special acknowledgements for individual micrographs appear with the relevant figures in the text.

The illustrations are an integral part of this book and all the drawings are originals. I am very fortunate to be associated with two exceptional artists whose complementary creativity resulted in clear, meaningful illustrations

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from my roughest sketches and ideas. Special thanks are due to both of them. Barbara Duckworth (from School of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University) did the labelling throughout and her special expertise in generating computer graphics, as well as in free-hand drawing, is reflected in her final products. Barbara is responsible for Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.3–4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 5.4, 6.1, 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 13.1, 13.2, 16.1–16.3, 17.1, 19.1 and 19.2. Betty Thorn (formally from School of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University) has a special talent in bringing biological drawings to life. Betty is responsible for the cover illustration and Figs. 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 5.5, 8.1, 8.2, 9.1, 11.1, 13.3 and 14.1. The drawings are the work of Barbara Duckworth and Betty Thorn.

Finally, the writing of this book was suggested by my editor Alan Crowden and I thank him and Cambridge University Press especially Tracey Sanderson and Jane Ward for giving me this opportunity and assisting its delivery: once I began to research and write, I found the project challenging and pleasurable.

Irina Pollard