the proposed solutions. Health-education initiatives typically use an individual approach that pays scant attention to the larger social context. However, Warren's chapter on health education indicates that in order to be effective, health education "must address issues of education, employment, housing, income, and racism, as well as health status" (p. 251).

However, the breadth of coverage leads to some losses in depth of analysis. In addition, the research reviewed is, at times, somewhat dated, with the obvious omission of important recent work. For example, the chapter on mental health notes the limitations of treatment data but concludes that blacks have lower levels of mental health than whites. The Epidemiometric Catchment Area (ECA) Study data are the best currently available to address the question of racial differences in psychiatric disorders. Some findings from the ECA are cited, but the central finding—race is omitted. The ECA data clearly indicate that, with the possible exception of some anxiety disorders, blacks do not have higher rates of psychiatric disorders than whites.

Similarly, Lather and Gomolin, in their discussion of adolescent pregnancy, indicate that "medical problems associated with teen-age pregnancy are intrinsically linked" (p. 212), neglecting the work of Alice Gerontius, which convincingly demonstrates that, on the basis of the associated medical risks, the late teen years are optimal for childbearing for black and Puerto Rican females (but not for Mexican Americans and whites).

Health Issues in the Black Community does an excellent job of highlighting the joint contribution of biological and social influences to health status and appropriately calls for more research attention to the contribution of the social environment. Jenkins's chapter on AIDS, for example, indicates that there was evidence in early as 1982 that blacks had a greater risk of AIDS than whites. He shows, though, that this was not due to any differences in biological susceptibility between the races, but to variations in the distribution of risk behaviors, coexisting conditions, and inadequate access to early diagnosis and treatment. Similarly, Harper's chapter on the black elderly states that "poverty, ignorance, social isolation, and racism are as deleterious to the aging process..."
and the quality of life for the black elderly as
are biologically "irreparable." (p. 227)
The volume is sensitive to issues of race
not only in understanding the causes of
particular health problems but also in
treatment approaches to them. It calls for
improvements in the quality of medical care,
critiques a broad range of strategies to increase
the pool of black health-care providers, and
highlights the potential contribution of indig-
nous health workers, but it also stresses that
medicine alone cannot solve the health
problems of the black community. For
example, in her discussion of the persistent
infant mortality gap between blacks and
whites, Floyd indicates that solutions based
on the medical model alone are inherently
flawed. "A truly comprehensive approach is
required. To fail to address the effects of
poverty, unemployment, lack of educational
opportunities, and racism on the overall infant
mortality rate is to down proposed solutions
to failure" (p. 171).

In rejecting the medical model, this volume
questions much of the conventional wisdom
on black health, but this healthy skepticism
was not applied to official statistics and data.
Although the problem of the census under-
count is noted, census data (unadjusted for
undercounts) and longevity and mortality rates
that use census data as denominators were
unquestioningly used. Net census undercount
for middle-aged black males ranges from
15%-19%, and rates that the census data as
denominators are overestimated by the same
percentage as the undercount. Unadjusted
census data can distort the demographic and
health profile of the black population.

There are also some glaring omissions in
the book. Although Avery's chapter on the
health problems of black women discusses
exercise and nutritional problems, it does not
address obesity, which is arguably one of the
most critical health problems among African-
American females. Black females are twice as
likely to be obese as their white counterparts,
and this high level of obesity is an important
factor in the higher rates of diabetes,
hypertension, and other chronic illnesses.
However, the most disappointing failure of
the volume is not addressing systematically
the role of racism and racial discrimination in
health. Almost every chapter asserts that
"racism," "racial bias," or "racial discrimina-
tion" is an important determinant of the
health of the black population. Little direct
evidence is provided, and there is no
discussion of the mechanisms by which
racism affects health. Arguably, one of the
most important issues in future research on
the relationship between race and health is the
development of theoretically informed mea-
sures of racism and discrimination and the
empirical assessment of their effects on
health. Most generally, the inadequate atten-
tion given to racism illustrates that although
Health Issues in the Black Community does an
admirable job of summarizing our knowledge
of the nature and extent of health problems
among African Americans, it is less success-
ful in raising the often-difficult, but promis-
ning, questions needed to guide future re-
search.