Sex differences in mortality rates result from genetic, physiological, behavioral, social, and environmental causes that are best understood when integrated into an evolutionary life history framework. This presentation depicts how sex differences in mortality rates across age and cause can be understood in the context of life history allocation of somatic and reproductive efforts. Excess male mortality is a result of a trade-off between competitiveness and longevity. Social and environmental conditions intensifying male competition for resources, status, and mates lead to increased male mortality through riskier behavior patterns and the impact of stress on physiological susceptibility. The fact that sex differences in mortality rates are not genetically determined encourages intervention efforts to reduce excess male mortality.

Tuesday, November 23, 2010
11:40 AM in Student Wing 323

Presented by the Evolutionary Studies and Biomedical Anthropology Programs

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