

Appreciation

Nicholas G. Norgan (1941–2006)

Nick Norgan, Reader in Human Biology at Loughborough University, died at the age of 65 years in March. He was a scholar and nutritional scientist of international repute who made important observations that helped to move forward the fields of body composition, human energetics and nutritional anthropometry. He graduated with a BSc in Nutrition from Queen Elizabeth College, University of London, followed by a PhD under John Durnin at the University of Glasgow. He joined Loughborough University in 1972 as a lecturer in applied human physiology, and was later promoted to senior lecturer, then reader. At Loughborough he was instrumental in founding one of the most successful research groups in the Department of Human Science, on human measurement and growth, where his research focused on nutritional anthropometry.

His research career took off in the late 1960s, when he took part in the International Biological Programme's Human Adaptability project, an international undertaking, the British component of which was supported by the Royal Society, and which took multidisciplinary teams in human biology to work among populations in Papua New Guinea (PNG), among other places. In PNG Nick and his lifelong friend and collaborator Anna Ferro-Luzzi studied energetics, body composition and nutritional adaptation among peoples then judged on the basis of their food supply to be at the margins of survival, but paradoxically appearing functionally healthy in most respects. Rigour in debate, planning, execution and reporting of research were his hallmarks.

His interest in the relationships between anthropometry and body composition and assessment of nutritional status stayed with him throughout his life, taking him to India, Australia, the USA, Japan and elsewhere. He was among the earliest to advocate the use of body mass index for the assessment of overnutrition; something that is now a standard instrument used globally.

Sabbatical leave in 1991–2 took him to the Department of Anatomy and Human Biology at the University of Western Australia. There he extended his research into extremes of body shape and how they affect interpretation of nutritional status, by analysis of anthropometric data in Australian aboriginal people. This work has proved important for the correct identification of undernutrition among other relatively-long-limbed populations in East



Africa, where populations continue to suffer the ravages of starvation and food shortage.

Nick wrote a great many research papers and reviews; he edited and co-edited books, among them one on physical activity and health, and another on childhood obesity. His expertise in nutrition and human biology was recognised nationally and internationally. He served on various international consultative committees concerned with developing nutrition policy. He served the professional bodies dear to him: the Society for the Study of Human Biology, the Nutrition Society and the International Association for the Study of Obesity. In 1995 he was appointed editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Annals of Human Biology*, and he continued working in this capacity until his personal strength failed him.

As a member of Amnesty International, Nick was sensitive to issues of human rights. He loved nature, particularly the countryside, bird-watching and his garden. A wonderful friend and colleague, Nick's quiet, unassuming and thoughtful presence is missed by all who knew him.

Stanley J. Ulijaszek and Peter R. M. Jones