

Answers to end of chapter questions

Chapter 11

1. For the Ariaal, it depends what proportion of them remain nomadic and what proportion settle. If they all become settled, then the 7R+ alleles may become rarer. If both lifestyles persist and there is gene flow between the nomadic and settled groups, then the two alleles will probably continue to co-exist. In the human population more generally, 7R+ alleles will disappear completely only if most or all of the population adopts a lifestyle where they are disadvantageous.
2. An evolutionary psychology perspective might stress some kind of mismatch. For example, perhaps in the ancestral environment, it made sense to delay reproduction when resources were abundant, in order to amass them. Resources were never abundant for very long, and people returned to reproducing as soon as they became scarcer, so this did not impair reproductive success. In modern affluent environments, resources are chronically abundant, and so people often delay reproduction so long that they don't get around to very much of it at all. A human behavioural ecology perspective might stress the trade-off between number and quality of offspring. Having a large family reduces the investment that you can make in each child. Perhaps in the contemporary, low infant mortality environment, you actually do better in terms of long-term descendant number if you have a smaller number but invest more in each to maximise their quality and thus their chance of reproducing in their turn. A gene-culture co-evolution perspective might stress the dynamics of who we learn our fertility patterns from. For example, perhaps we emulate people with high social status. With industrialization, high social status has increasingly gone to those who are highly educated, and so can control aspects of industry, science, or government. Becoming highly educated necessitates delaying reproduction. Thus, the small cadre with highest social status has to consist of people with relatively small families. Then, if

the rest of society emulates high status people, you end up with small families across the board, even in social groups who could afford to have larger ones.