Abstract

Fluctuating Asymmetry, Developmental Instability and Developmental Stress: Insights from Zebra Finches, Sticklebacks, Rabbits, Humans and Opuntia Cacti †

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The use of fluctuating asymmetry as a measure of developmental instability and stress experienced during development has become one of the most controversial topics in evolutionary biology and ecology. While this controversy likely has understandably demotivated some researchers to invest more time and effort into this area of research, it has also stimulated studies in new areas, using large sample sizes and the development and application of new methods. In this presentation, I will present and discuss results from a number of large studies in which I have been involved, in a variety of model systems, including human and rabbit fetuses, opuntia cacti, sticklebacks and zebra finches. The focus will be on what we can expect from asymmetry measurements and how these results fit in the overall literature.

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