

Intergenerational Changes in the Biological Dynamics of Populations from Southern Poland in the 20th Century

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ABSTRACT The study material contained questionnaires with questions referring to three generations of women living in two geographical regions of Poland, Podbeskidzie (313 families) and Podkarpacie (437 families). By computing fertility rates, we attempted to find out whether there were any regional factors determining the biological dynamics of these populations in the 20th century. We were also looking for an answer to the question whether living conditions specific for functioning in various types of population clusters (such as village, town, and city) had an effect on the fertility and mortality levels in the families of the subjects of the study. The dynamic nature of the processes associated with fertility and mortality on the population level was studied with the use of the index of opportunity for natural selection. Populations inhabiting the geographical regions under study were similar in terms of the mean number of children in families that had finished reproduction. The intergenerational comparison revealed a significant decline in the total fertility rate in all subgroups formed by size of population cluster. The analysis of the data for the generations of the subjects' mothers and grandmothers showed a distinct decline in child mortality rate. The increase in the fertility rate in the generation of the subjects' mothers may be explained with improving social care provided by the state at that time.