For the first time, the widely scattered body of research on the effects of risk factor screening is comprehensively reviewed and evaluated in this volume. As screening programs for HIV, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, genetic abnormalities and other risk factors continue to proliferate, difficult questions are continually raised concerning the psychological and behavioral effects on the participants. Although members of the public health community have debated the costs and benefits of screening programs for over three decades, these questions have become especially pertinent with the current emphasis on early disease detection and prevention. While advocates argue that risk notification provides the impetus for individuals to improve their health habits and seek early treatment, skeptics contend that risk screening can have an adverse labeling effect, leading to increased anxiety, work absenteeism, and fatalism.

In this volume an internationally recognized group of expert contributors summarizes and discusses current knowledge about the psychosocial consequences of risk factor testing, taking into account individual differences, gender differences, risk status, and intervention strategies. Both the public health and behavioral science viewpoints are explored through up-to-date reviews and stimulating commentary. Briding the gap between data, theory and public health policy, this volume is essential reading for researchers, professionals and policymakers concerned with the prevention of acute and chronic disease.