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Q5(b)

Evolutionary significance of menopause.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Relevance of menarche, menopause and other bioevents to fertility. Fertility patterns and differentials.

11.1 Relevance of menarche, menopause and other bioevents to fertility. Fertility patterns and differentials.

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

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Grandmother hypothesis

Kristen Hawkes argued that post-reproductive women raise inclusive fitness by provisioning grandchildren, with Hadza foraging as a key ethnographic file.

Antagonistic pleiotropy

George Williams's idea that genes with early-life benefits can be selected even if they bring later costs. It frames ageing and life-history trade-offs.

Human-chimpanzee contrast

A long, regular post-reproductive life is marked in humans and weak or rare in wild chimpanzees, which is why menopause is treated as a human life-history problem.

Inclusive fitness

Selection can favour helping kin who share genes. Grandmaternal care is argued in that currency, not as simple kindness.

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