

Women's Global Health and Human Rights

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of two extraordinary people who have contributed to improving the lives of women by upholding their human rights: my beloved father, M. K. Kashinath and my mentor, Suman Mehta.

This book is also dedicated to my mother, Krishna Kashinath, who taught me to respect my fellow global citizens.

Padmini Murthy

My dedication is to my parents, Celia Renée Lanford Smith and Clyde Copeland Smith, the persons who first and always have oriented me toward health and human rights.

Clyde Lanford Smith

We also dedicate this to the memory of the disappeared, of the survivors, of all women who have suffered just by reason of their gender, and of all women who have fought for the integrity of their and every person's health and human rights.

*Padmini Murthy
Clyde Lanford Smith*

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Padmini Murthy

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Clyde Lanford Smith

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Foreword

A Prayer for the Girl-Child

When I grow up
Please let me:
Be safe.
Learn to read and write.
Live with my parents
And my brothers and sisters.
Not be sold to work
As an indentured servant
Or a sex slave.
Have enough food
And clean water
To enable me to have
A healthy body and mind.
Keep my sexual organs
Intact and not mutilated.
Allowed to love and marry
The person of my choice.
Enabled to keep
The children that I bear,
And to bear as many as I choose.
When I grow up
May I discover
A world populated
By all who honor
Peace.
And one another.
When I grow up,
May we all be
As one.

Suzanne Stutman, PhD

Dr. Stutman is a Professor of English, American Studies, and Women's Studies at Penn State University and Abington College, as well as a poet and human rights activist.

Preface

Globalization has changed the fabric of society, while the health and human rights of women are remaining stagnant or growing worse in many parts of the world. Some of what the statistics document is so ugly as to seem incompatible with the word *civilization*. Women in this day and age are denied their fundamental right to enjoy a complete state of health as defined by the World Health Organization. Causes include structural violence as well as other disease entities, many of which are dealt with superficially in current public health texts, if they are mentioned at all.

This book is unique in that it addresses the similarities and differences in health and human rights challenges faced by women in different regions of the world. The diversity of backgrounds and geographic locations of the invited authors contributes to the book's richness of content. It is meant to be a text that inspires and educates its readers toward positive action.

The book has been divided into seven sections. The first section gives an introduction to women's global health in a human rights context. The second section addresses the effects of gender-based violence, disasters including war, environmental factors, health policies, and transnational violence on women and the girl-child. The third section discusses the effect economics has on women's human rights. Section four explores the health problems and challenges specific to women within a human rights framework and the global burden they cause. Section five discusses the effects of cultural practices on the health and well-being of women and the girl-child. The sixth section re-

views progress made and challenges faced by women and practitioners of public health in reducing gender disparities and human rights violations. The seventh section is the conclusion, which summarizes the long and difficult path women have to travel before they can enjoy a complete state of health within a human rights context.

Women's Global Health and Human Rights was conceived as a tool for all who find the health and human rights of women imperative to their professional and personal lives (including those who are literally not yet able to read it due to issues of literacy and access). We have written toward a readership of global practitioners and students of public health and social justice, including those in the field as well as persons influencing policy nearer the decision makers. However, we hope, and expect, our readers will surprise us with their diversity of action and potential, meaning with the breadth of what and how they are engaging diverse actors toward our one goal of making women's health and human rights a reality recognized and cherished by everyone everywhere.

Because understanding women's global health and human rights is essential to public health best practice, our principal challenge has been to connect author practice experts with others engaged in or learning toward becoming public health practitioners and promoters of social justice.

Our end goal is expressed most eloquently by the poetry of our Foreword: "when I grow up,/ may we all be/ as one."

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Clyde Lanford (Lanny) Smith is a writer and a physician, having majored in English literature and trained in primary care internal medicine, tropical medicine, and preventive medicine. He earned a masters in public health from Harvard School of Public Health and a diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene from the London School of Hygiene

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