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Introducing Women's Global Health and Human Rights

Padmini Murthy

New York Medical College

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Introducing *Women's Global Health and Human Rights*

Padmini Murthy, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., C.H.E.S.

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 which 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 impact of economics 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 reviews 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). This was 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.

Since understanding women's global health and human rights is essential to Public Health Best Practice, the principal challenge has been to connect author practice experts with others engaged in or learning to become public health practitioners and promoters of social justice.

Padmini (Mini) Murthy is a physician activist who has worked in several countries. Currently she serves on the faculty at New York Medical College and the School of Public Health. She has been the recipient of several awards and has presented at national and international conferences on women's health. Murthy has worked as consultant to the United Nations and serves as member of the Women's Rights Committee and a Section Councilor of the International Health Section of the American Public Health Association.