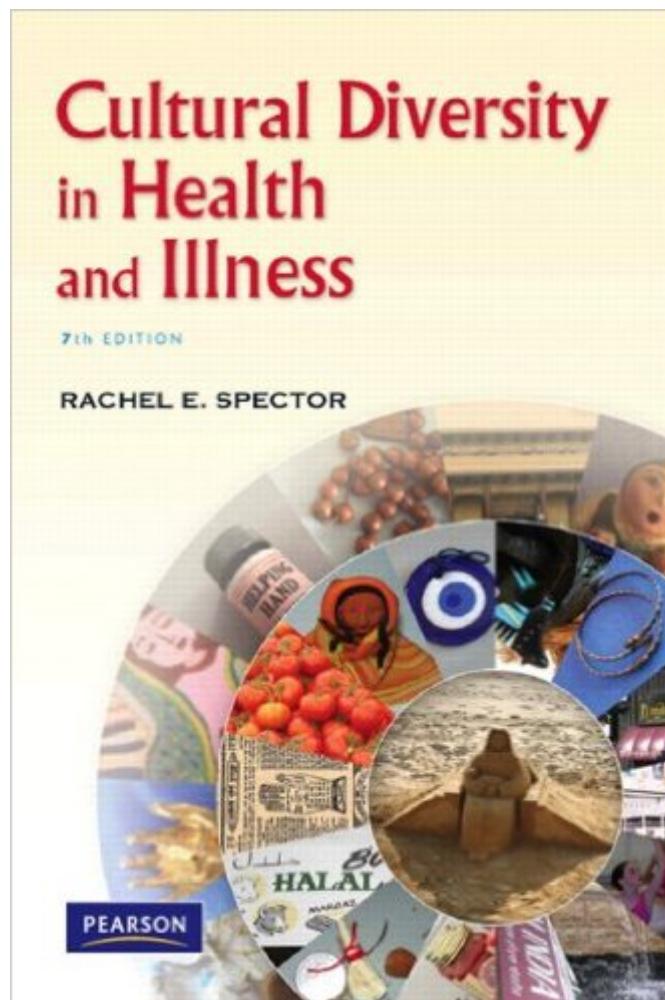


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Cultural Diversity In Health And Illness (7th Edition)



Synopsis

The seventh edition of this well-respected book continues to promote an awareness of the dimensions and complexities involved in caring for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Completely revised and updated, it examines the differences existing within North America by probing the health care system and consumers, and examples of traditional health beliefs and practices among selected populations. An emphasis on the influences of recent social, political, and demographic changes helps to explore the issues and perceptions of health and illness today. An essential for any health-care professional, this book sets the standard for cultural perspectives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This review updated by author on March 21, 2006:I recently (Spring 2005) used this text in an undergraduate health professions course titled "Diversity in Health and Illness". The author addresses a broad scope of cultures, issues and responses to cultural needs in health care. Although the book contains much that is useful, my students found it to be, on balance, confusing and disorganized.I believe much of this response can be attributed to poor editing. We identified numerous spelling and grammar errors throughout. Poorly edited content is also evident in several chapters. Example: "...this chapter has introduced the dominant culture's perception of health and illness through countless lenses" (pp. 67). Similarly, "...countless letters are displayed attesting to the healing powers of this statue" (pp. 106). Isn't there a more accurate word to use in place of

'countless'? More importantly, ethnic and race labels are not used consistently. "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used as though they are strictly interchangeable; ditto for "Black" and "African American." Term consistency would enhance clarity. My concerns with the text are more fundamental and numerous but I will limit myself to a few examples:

USE OF SOURCE DATA AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

Although the text is heavily laden with descriptive statistics, comparative data is often not included, thus limiting interpretations. For example, the discussion of rising expenditures for unconventional therapies in the U.S. (pp. 96) includes expenditure estimates for 1990 and 1997. Without companion statistics for conventional therapy expenditures, readers are unable to assess the magnitude of the trend. Similarly, the description of the African American population as young (54.4% are under 18 - pp.

There is some interesting information on health and illness in the first half of this book, but the cultural evaluations in the second half of the book are lacking depth. The book places too much emphasis on race and too little emphasis on ethnicity. If you are looking for a book on health and wellness this may be useful, but if you want to study cultural diversity, this may not work for you. The book is definitely missing many key cultures.

Example 1: In Chapter 12, the chapter on Hispanic populations, there is a table listing the 8 regions where people identify themselves as Hispanic and the corresponding percentages of the US Hispanic population made up by each of these groups. Only two of these cultures, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, are discussed in any depth. This oversight excludes all of the Hispanics from Central America, South America, and other smaller Hispanic populations. It does make sense to review the Mexican Culture because that culture represents the largest portion of our Hispanic population in the US. However, Central Americans make up the 2nd largest % of the US Hispanic population, whereas the Puerto Ricans make up only 9.2% of the US Hispanic population. The arbitrary inclusion and exclusion of specific cultures may raise some concern.

Example 2: In Chapter 13, the chapter on White populations, there is a table listing only 7 of the countries where people identify themselves as white and the corresponding percentages of the US white population made up by each of these groups. There are many countries with substantial populations in the US that are absent from this breakdown.

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