



Women, Wellness, and the Media

Margaret C. Wiley

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As a former nurse and someone who now teaches Women's Studies, I have long been interested in the politics of health care. Today, most Americans would agree that our health care system is broken. We pay more for health care than any nation in the world, yet in 2007, the World Health Organization ranked us as 37th in quality of health care. Forty-six million Americans are now without health insurance. What is happening here? And just where are all these dollars going? In Women, Wellness, and the Media, thirteen scholars from a wide range of disciplines examine the relationship between media stereotypes and women's health. They look at several images of women: the perfect mom; the straight, bikini-clad sixteen-year old blond who has been air-brushed to perfection; the wild black Jezebel who struts her stuff; and the shriveled up menopausal crone. The writers point out that these images are making millions of dollars for all sorts of businesses ranging from the pharmaceutical industry to women's magazines. Scholars have long noted that stereotypes disempower women; in Women Wellness and the Media we see how these stereotypes actually harm women's health while turning millions in corporate profits.

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Vanessa Gilliam:

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