



Mexican Americans and Health: ¡Sana! ¡Sana! (The Mexican American Experience)

Adela de la Torre, Antonio Estrada

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By the middle of the twenty-first century, one out of every six Americans will be of Mexican descent; and as health care becomes of increasing concern to all Americans, the particular needs of Mexican Americans will have to be more thoroughly addressed. *Mexican Americans and Health* explains how the health of Mexican-origin people is often related to sociodemographic conditions and genetic factors, while historical and political factors influence how Mexican Americans enter the health care system and how they are treated once they access it. It considers such issues as occupational hazards for Mexican-origin agricultural workers--including pesticide poisoning, heat-related conditions, and musculoskeletal disorders--and women's health concerns, such as prenatal care, preventable cancers, and domestic violence. The authors clearly discuss the health status of Mexican Americans relative to the rest of the U.S. population, interweaving voices of everyday people to explain how today's most pressing health issues have special relevance to the Mexican American community:

- how values such as *machismo*, *familismo*, and *marianismo* influence care-seeking decisions and treatment of illness;
- how factors such as cultural values, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, and family concerns can contribute to substance abuse;
- how cultural attitudes toward sex can heighten the risk of AIDS--and how approaches to AIDS prevention and education need to reflect core cultural values such as *familismo*, *respeto*, and *confianza*. The book also addresses concerns of Mexican Americans regarding the health care system. These include not only access to care and to health insurance but also the shortage of bilingual and bicultural health care professionals. This coverage stresses not only the importance of linguistic competency but also the need to understand folklore illnesses, herbal remedies, and spiritual practices that can delay the treatment of illness and either complement or compromise treatment. Of all the issues that face the contemporary Mexican American community, none is as important to its very survival as health and health care. This timely book gives readers a broad understanding of these complex issues and points the way toward a healthier future for all people of Mexican origin.

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