



Speaking from the Body: Latinas on Health and Culture

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In compelling first-person accounts, Latinas speak freely about dealing with serious health episodes as patients, family caregivers, or friends. They show how the complex interweaving of gender, class, and race impacts the health status of Latinas—and how family, spirituality, and culture affect the experience of illness.

Here are stories of Latinas living with conditions common to many: hypertension, breast cancer, obesity, diabetes, depression, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia, Parkinson's, lupus, and hyper/hypothyroidism. By bringing these narratives out from the shadows of private lives, they demonstrate how such ailments form part of the larger whole of Latina lives that encompasses family, community, the medical profession, and society. They show how personal identity and community intersect to affect the interpretation of illness, compliance with treatment, and the utilization of allopathic medicine, alternative therapies, and traditional healing practices. The book also includes a retrospective analysis of the narratives and a discussion of Latina health issues and policy recommendations.

These Latina cultural narratives illustrate important aspects of the social contexts and real-world family relationships crucial to understanding illness. *Speaking from the Body* is a trailblazing collection of personal testimonies that integrates professional and personal perspectives and shows that our understanding of health remains incomplete if Latina cultural narratives are not included.

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