



Women's Health

Contemporary International Perspectives

Edited by Jane M. Ussher

WOMEN'S HEALTH: CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Jan Burns trained as a clinical psychologist after completing her Ph.D. at the University of Wales. After working as a clinician within the National Health Service she joined the University of Leeds as a Lecturer in Clinical Psychology. During this time she also worked as a researcher and manager in the NHS. In 1995 she moved to the Salomons Centre to work on the Clinical Training Scheme. She is now the Academic Director of the Centre for Social and Psychological Development, Canterbury Christ Church College. Throughout her career Jan has continued her clinical work with people with learning disabilities. Her research has also included gender and she was one of the founding members of the Psychology of Women section of The British Psychological Society.

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Anna Gibbs teaches in the School of Communication and Media at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Her recent work in cultural studies crosses boundaries between classical and contemporary psychoanalysis, and between critical theory and clinical research and writing. She is currently working on a project dealing with affect in public life, paying particular attention to face and faciality.

Sheila Greene qualified as a clinical psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London and worked for two years as the head of a research team at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Academic Co-Director of the Children's Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin. Her research and publications are primarily in the area of developmental psychology.

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Sarah Grogan is Senior Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University, U.K., where she teaches health psychology and research methods. Her main area of research interest is women's body image. She is currently involved in a longitudinal study of body image in children from 6 to 16 years, and in a study of women's motivations for body building and anabolic steroid use.

Harriet Gross is a Lecturer in Psychology at Loughborough University, U.K. Before doing her first degree and her Ph.D., Harriet ran a small bookshop in London. She joined Loughborough in 1988, where she teaches developmental and women's psychology. Her interests are in the psychosocial aspects of pregnancy and started with research into cognitive failure during pregnancy. Her research now covers a range of pregnancy-related issues, with a particular focus on pregnancy and employment and the impact of this experience on future work.

Helen Keane is currently a Lecturer in Women's Studies at the Australian National University where she completed her doctorate in 1998. She has published on foetal alcohol syndrome, medical models of addiction, recovery discourse and smoking. She is working on a book based on her doctoral thesis, *What's Wrong with Addiction?*

Susan Kippax is a social psychologist whose major research interest is the social aspects of HIV prevention, treatment and care. Professor Kippax is Director of the National Centre in HIV Social Research at the University of New South Wales. She has published extensively on HIV/AIDS, particularly in regard to sexual practice and sexuality. Her work with gay community members, public health practitioners, policy-makers and educators has convinced her of the benefits of reflexive and collaborative research.

Celia Kitzinger is Reader in Lesbian and Feminist Psychology at Loughborough University, U.K. She has published eight books, including *The Social Construction of Lesbianism* (1987), *Changing Our Minds: Lesbian Feminism and Psychology* (with Rachel Perkins, 1993) and *Heterosexuality* (with Sue Wilkinson, 1993). She is currently working on conversation analysis.

Annemarie Kolk is a clinical psychologist and senior lecturer in clinical psychology and health psychology at the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests are in the domain of women and health, in particular somatization, menstrual cycle and gender role stress.

Mary Koss is Professor of Public Health, Family and Community Medicine, Psychiatry, and Psychology in the Arizona Prevention Center of the University of Arizona College of Medicine. A member of the National Research Council Panel on Violence Against Women, she is the recipient of a Research Scientist Development Award from the National Institute of Mental Health. She is also the recipient of the Heritage Award from the APA Division of the Psychology of Women.

Hilary Lapsley and **Linda Waimarie Nikora** are the Principal Researchers and **Rose Black** has been Project Researcher on 'Success Stories: Narratives of Recovery from Disabling Mental Health Problems', a Health Research Council of New Zealand funded project based in Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. Lapsley and Black are both Pakeha New Zealanders and Nikora's Kiwi affiliations are with Tuhoe and Te Aitanga-A-Hauiti; all three are psychologists interested in culture, identity, and mental health.

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Sue Lees is Professor of Women's Studies at the University of North London, UK. Her publications include *Losing Out* (1986), *Sugar and Spice: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls* (1993), *Carnal Knowledge* (1997), *Policing Sexual Assault* (with J. Gregory, 1999). She has acted as consultant to five major TV documentaries: *Getting Away with Rape*, which won the Royal Television Award for the best home documentary of 1994, *Male Rape* (1995), *Till Death Do Us Part* (1996), and *Men Behaving Badly* (1998). She was a founder member of the Women's Studies Network Association of which she was joint Chair from 1988 to 1992 and is on the editorial board of the journal *Gender and Education*.

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Alison Thomas is an Adjunct Associate Professor with the Sociology Department of the University of Victoria, Canada. After first becoming involved in research on sexual harassment ten years ago, in 1996 she undertook a comparative study of the impact of sexual harassment policies in universities in Canada and the U.K. She has published a number of articles and book chapters on her work in this field, and in 1997 was co-editor (with Celia Kitinger) of *Sexual Harassment: Contemporary Feminist Perspectives*.

Leonore Tiefer is a feminist and psychologist who has specialized in sexuality for 30 years. She began with a Ph.D. on hormones and hamsters, but in response to the women's movement, she shifted into human sexual theories and problems, with an emphasis on how the politics of sexuality is reflected in and promoted by science and medicine. Her recent collection is a good introduction to her ideas: *Sex is Not a Natural Act, and Other Essays* (1995).

Deborah L. Tolman is Senior Research Scientist and Director of the Adolescent Sexuality Project at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, U.S.A. She is currently completing a book on urban and suburban American adolescent girls' experiences of sexual desire, *Dilemma of Desire*, to be published by Harvard University Press. Her recent research activities include the development of the Femininity Ideology Scale and a longitudinal study of female and male adolescent sexual health, addressing both risks and resiliencies.

Jane Ussher is Associate Professor in the Centre for Critical Psychology at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Her books include *The Psychology of the Female Body* (1989), *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?* (1991), *The Psychology of Women's Health and Health Care* (1992, with Paula Nicolson), *Body Talk: The Material and Discursive Regulation of Sexuality, Madness and Reproduction* (1997), and *Fantasies of Femininity: Reframing the Boundaries of Sex* (1997). Her research interests are women's sexuality, madness, and Premenstrual Syndrome. She is currently working on a project looking at narratives of depression and breakdown in women of different generations.

Wendy Vanselow is a general practitioner with a special interest in women's health and education. Based in Melbourne, Australia, she trained in obstetrics and gynaecology in England. Her research interest in pre-menstrual complaints arose from her work at the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society and formed the basis of her doctoral thesis. Recently appointed Associate Medical Editor of *Australian Family Physician*, she has an ambition to promote women's health physician training in Australia.

Jane Weaver trained as a nurse and midwife in England in the 1970s. More recently she completed a B.Sc. in Psychology at University College London. This was followed by a Ph.D. exploring the issues of control around childbirth, again at

UCL, with the supervision and support of Jane Ussher and Lucy Yardley. She is now at the Centre for Family Research, Cambridge, U.K., researching choice and decision making in caesarean section.

Sue Wilkinson is Reader in Feminism and Social Psychology at Loughborough University, U.K. She is the founding and current editor of *Feminism and Psychology*, and the book series *Gender and Psychology: Feminist and Critical Perspectives*. Her books include: *Feminist Social Psychologies* and, with Celia Kitzinger, *Heterosexuality, Women and Health, Feminism and Discourse*, and *Representing the Other*. Her main research interests are in feminist and critical approaches to sexuality and health, especially breast cancer and lesbian health.

Anne Woollett is a Professor in the Department of Psychology, University of East London. She has a long-term interest in motherhood, mothering and women's reproductive health. In 1991 she edited, with Ann Phoenix and Eva Lloyd *Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies*, and has contributed, with Harriette Marshall, to *Handbook on Psychology of Women and Gender*, edited by Rhoda Unger. She is now researching young people's ideas about families and family transitions.

Anjum Yazdani has several years of experience on qualitative research projects, particularly with black and ethnic minority participants. She was based at the Newham Innercity Multifund (a GP co-operative) from 1996 to 1998 where she worked as a researcher on a young Asian women and self-harm research project. She then worked as a Research Assistant with Anne Woollett and Harriette Marshall at the University of East London on a study exploring young people, identity and citizenship in the inner city. She is now working as an Assistant Psychologist for South Downs NHS Trust (U.K.).

PREFACE

Putting together this collection of papers on women's health has been a labour of love. At times it has felt as if the gestation period would never end – liaising with 71 contributors around the globe, each with their own idiosyncrasies, their own style of writing, their own concerns, has meant a stream of continuous dialogue across cyberspace for over a year. Now that it is coming to the point of birth (or at least publication), it feels both a relief (like all long-awaited progeny) and sadness. Letting go of any work of creation is never easy. There is never a point of perfect completion. There is always more to be said or done. Women who face labour after nine months of waiting may cry 'I'm not ready', but nature says otherwise, and come the baby does. In this case publication deadlines and promises to contributors push this book to the point of delivery. At least, as editor, I don't have birth pains to contend with, and won't afterwards be kept awake at night by the fruit of my labour. Indeed, as this book isn't my own creation, but the creation of a collection of inspired and inspiring others, it is perhaps inappropriate that I metaphorically claim the role of the one who gives birth at all. My role is much more one of midwife, gently encouraging each person to deliver to me. To be able to do this with so many different people, who are located in many different parts of the world, has been a pleasure and a privilege. It has brought home to me the power of new technologies to speed communication and collaboration across continents and across time zones. As I sleep in Sydney my emails are answered in North America and Europe. Those who wish to talk to each other about issues of concern to women's health do so regardless of time, distance or geographical boundary. It is a salutary experience.

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I want to acknowledge the co-operation of each of the contributors and their generosity in donating the book's royalties to Marie Stopes International. I also want to acknowledge the important role played by Joyce Collins, Jon Reed and Rachel Gear at BPS who first conceived of the project and asked me to edit it. I didn't quite know what I was taking on when I said 'Yes', but I'm glad I did. I hope that everyone who has taken part is as happy as I am with the joint book we have produced. Finally, I would like to thank Sharon Mundy for helping with the layout of the final manuscript.

Jane M. Ussher, Sydney, May 2000

For Ann Game

All profits from the sale of this book will be donated to Marie Stopes International. Marie Stopes International provides vital reproductive health services where they are most needed, in low-income communities throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Our global network of clinics and mobile units caters for both women and men, and reaches neglected groups like adolescents and refugees. With services like family planning, obsteric services, ante- and post-natal care, and HIV/AIDS awareness projects, Marie Stopes International helps to save lives, reduce illness and give families the choice to plan for a better future.