



# Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural, and Epidemiological Perspectives

*James Waldram, D. Ann Herring, T. Kue Young*

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Numerous studies, inquiries, and statistics accumulated over the years have demonstrated the poor health status of Aboriginal peoples relative to the Canadian population in general. *Aboriginal Health in Canada* is about the complex web of physiological, psychological, spiritual, historical, sociological, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to health and disease patterns among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

The authors explore the evidence for changes in patterns of health and disease prior to and since European contact, up to the present. They discuss medical systems and the place of medicine within various Aboriginal cultures and trace the relationship between politics and the organization of health services for Aboriginal people. They also examine popular explanations for Aboriginal health patterns today, and emphasize the need to understand both the historical-cultural context of health issues, as well as the circumstances that give rise to variation in health problems and healing strategies in Aboriginal communities across the country. An overview of Aboriginal peoples in Canada provides a very general background for the non-specialist. Finally, contemporary Aboriginal healing traditions, the issue of self-determination and health care, and current trends in Aboriginal health issues are examined.

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