



Risk and Choice in Maternity Care: An International Perspective

Andrew Symon

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This title is directed primarily towards health care professionals outside of the United States. This book explores the complex interrelationship between risk and choice in maternity care, taking a close look at how "high" and "low" risk are defined and what impact this has on a woman's ability to exercise informed choices throughout pregnancy. It offers an international collaboration that highlights different perspectives on debated issues, with chapters on maternity care in the UK, United States, Australia, and Ireland contributed by midwives, obstetricians, risk management experts, and sociologists. The aim of this book is to illustrate the changing reality of risk management as it relates to maternity care, and to highlight risk management concerns that may limit the choices available to pregnant women.

- Clarifies how applications of risk affect the choices pregnant women are able to exercise.
- Locates pregnancy risk considerations within the overall scheme of risk management.
- Analyzes practitioners' responses to the requirements of risk management.
- Presents risk management and choice from the risk manager's perspective, providing an understanding of risk as a "macro concept" in health care.
- Highlights medico-legal opinions on exercising choice, underscoring the need for accurate information and the ability to make informed decisions.
- Two chapters examine women's perspectives on risk labeling and the impact this has on choice - one in which the concept of safety within maternity care is discussed, and one in which the views of women with defined risk factors are explored and their ability to make choices is evaluated.
- Two chapters written by health service risk managers discuss the differences between an inner-city approach and a rural approach to the debate surrounding risk and choice.
- Discusses midwifery's focus on "normality" in childbirth and considers how this viewpoint affects the risk dialogue, including a chapter on clinical trends in maternity care.
- An obstetric perspective on risk refutes criticisms of obstetricians as being more likely to impose risk labels and limit choices by discussing how risks and choices are presented and considered within obstetric care.
- Explores the debate surrounding a woman's right to have a home birth in Ireland, in light of its risk management climate.
- Two chapters discuss the collaboration between service users, midwives, and obstetricians in Australia regarding the organization and delivery of maternity care, as well as the views concerning risk among indigenous Australians.
- Perspectives from nurse-midwives in the U.S. discuss the complex relationships among nurse-midwives, obstetricians, and pregnant women with regard to choice, including views on risk within immigrant communities.

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