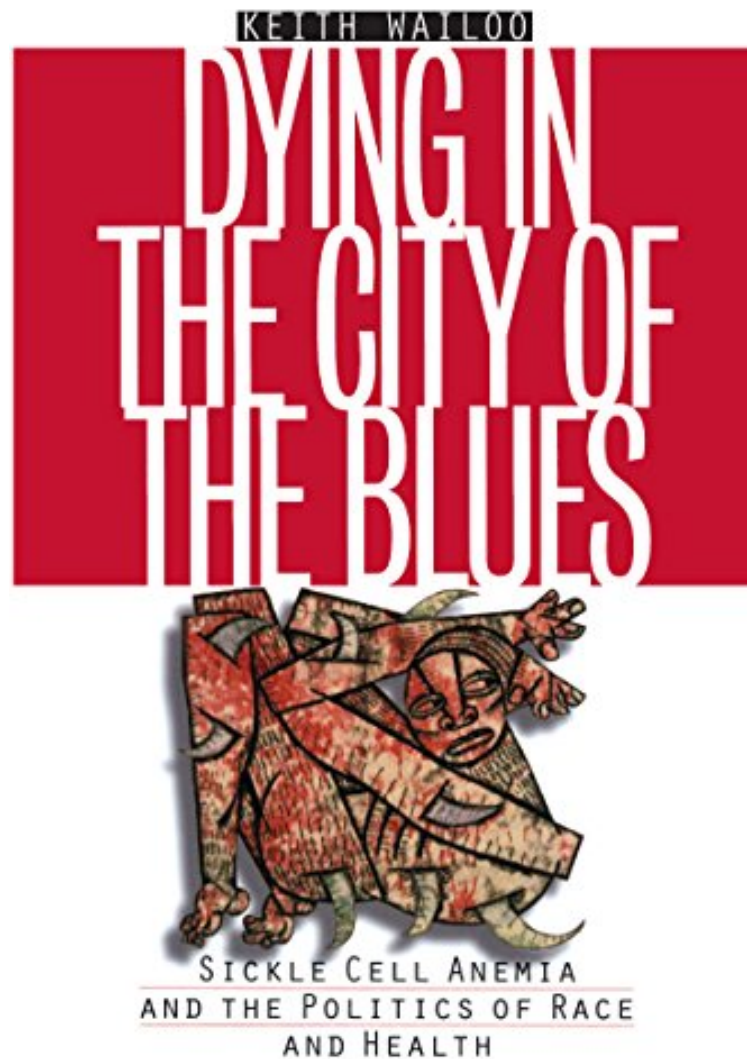


[FREE] Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health

Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health

Keith Wailoo

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Keith Wailoo : Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health:

This groundbreaking book chronicles the history of sickle cell anemia in the United States, tracing its transformation from an "invisible" malady to a powerful, yet contested, cultural symbol of African American pain and suffering. Set in Memphis, home of one of the nation's first sickle cell clinics, *Dying in the City of the Blues* reveals how the recognition, treatment, social understanding, and symbolism of the disease evolved in the twentieth century, shaped by the politics of race, region, health care, and biomedicine. Using medical journals, patients' accounts, black newspapers, blues lyrics, and many other sources, Keith Wailoo follows the disease and its sufferers from the early days of obscurity before sickle cell's "discovery" by Western medicine; through its rise to clinical, scientific, and social prominence in the 1950s; to its politicization in the 1970s and 1980s. Looking forward, he considers the consequences of managed care on the politics of disease in the twenty-first century. A rich and multilayered narrative, *Dying in the City of the Blues* offers valuable new insight into the African American experience, the impact of race relations and ideologies on health care, and the politics of science, medicine, and disease.

From Publishers Weekly
From slavery onward, diseases real and imaginary have played significant and complex roles in race relations. Wailoo, professor of social medicine and history at UNC-Chapel Hill, focuses on one disease, sickle cell anemia, in one city, Memphis, to fashion a compelling demonstration of how powerful and significant this underappreciated interaction between illness and race has been, in particular tracing a cycle of ignorance of illness and suffering among blacks, to recognition of the reality of sickle cell disease and back to a disregard for black pain and suffering. American discovery of sickle cell anemia in 1910 was followed by decades of obscurity (some doctors simply denied its existence). But a 1934 report that Memphis led the nation with an 11% infant mortality rate was a difficult turning point, eventually leading to medicine displacing cotton as the city's prime economic focus. From the 1940s to the 1970s, there was a growing acknowledgement of sickle cell disease and an increase in medical services provided to the African-American community (though, according to Wailoo, treating sick black children was an easier racial accommodation on the part of the white establishment than acknowledging issues of black power), culminating in the 1972 Sickle Cell Control Act that brought Memphis \$500,000 for research. This high point of celebrity and sympathetic visibility contrasted sharply with the 1990s, when medical authorities began again to question the reality of pain inflicted on sufferers by the disease - due, according to the author, to the establishment's increasing focus on treatment costs and the resurgence of stereotypes about blacks and drug use, in particular (unwarranted) fears that prescribing painkillers would lead to drug addiction. This unassuming masterpiece of revelation focuses on a new, more precise lens on the intersection of race, illness and politics. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Wailoo (social medicine, Univ. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) sets forth a history of sickle cell disease (SCD) from the academic perspective of social medicine. In this overly detailed, scholarly examination, Wailoo investigates the entire spectrum of the social, cultural, scientific, economic, political, and, most especially, racial aspects of the disease. He unifies and focuses his narrative on the underlying health history of black Americans from slavery through current-day managed care and the rise of SCD from near-invisibility to a major national medical research effort. In Wailoo's comprehensive telling, the story of SCD in Memphis is the definitive story of race and health in the United States. It is a fascinating narrative based on scholarly hypotheses that bear hints of an academic dissertation. Nonetheless, the book is recommended for academic, medical, and larger public libraries because Wailoo makes clear how SCD and all the issues surrounding it reflect societal crises at the intersection of black culture and American health politics. James Swanton, Harlem Hosp., New York Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.
Wailoo's comprehensive telling is the definitive story of race and health in the United States. ("Library Journal")
An informative, though unsettling, scholarly account of the African American life experience throughout the 20th century. ("Choice")
A brilliantly original approach to understanding the shifting nature of race relations over time as well as a unique perspective on the twentieth century history of Memphis. ("Memphis Commercial Appeal")
This remarkable text on the social construction of the illness speaks of how ancient, bloody, brutal and enduring the facts of racial disparity in health and care really are in the American experience. ("Nature")
This unassuming masterpiece of revelation focuses a new, more precise lens on the intersection of race, illness and politics. ("Publishers Weekly", starred review)