



Anthropology of Pregnancy Loss: Comparative Studies in Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Neo-natal Death (Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women S)

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How much influence does culture have on a mother's reactions to pregnancy loss? At what stage is a fetus attributed with human status? How does this affect the mother's reactions to the loss of a baby?

Contemporary, historical and oral-history accounts from regions as diverse as rural North India, urban America, South Africa and Northern Ireland, provide a fascinating insight into the experience and management of miscarriage across a number of different cultures. The authors explore how the social, technological and medical context in which miscarriages occur can affect the ways in which women experience such an event.

In the West, advances in medical technology, a low infant-mortality rate and a low birth rate have raised expectations as to the successful outcome of each pregnancy. In addition, the early confirmation of pregnancy makes consequent pregnancy loss -- which might have gone unnoticed or unconfirmed in the past -- all the more difficult for mothers in the West. Yet, mourning rituals and behaviour at a pregnancy loss, which may be elaborate in some societies, are generally considered to be inappropriate in many Western societies. Differing social beliefs regarding the causes of miscarriage, preventative measures and curative treatments are also examined.

Medical anthropologists, sociologists and health professionals will all find this book fascinating reading.

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