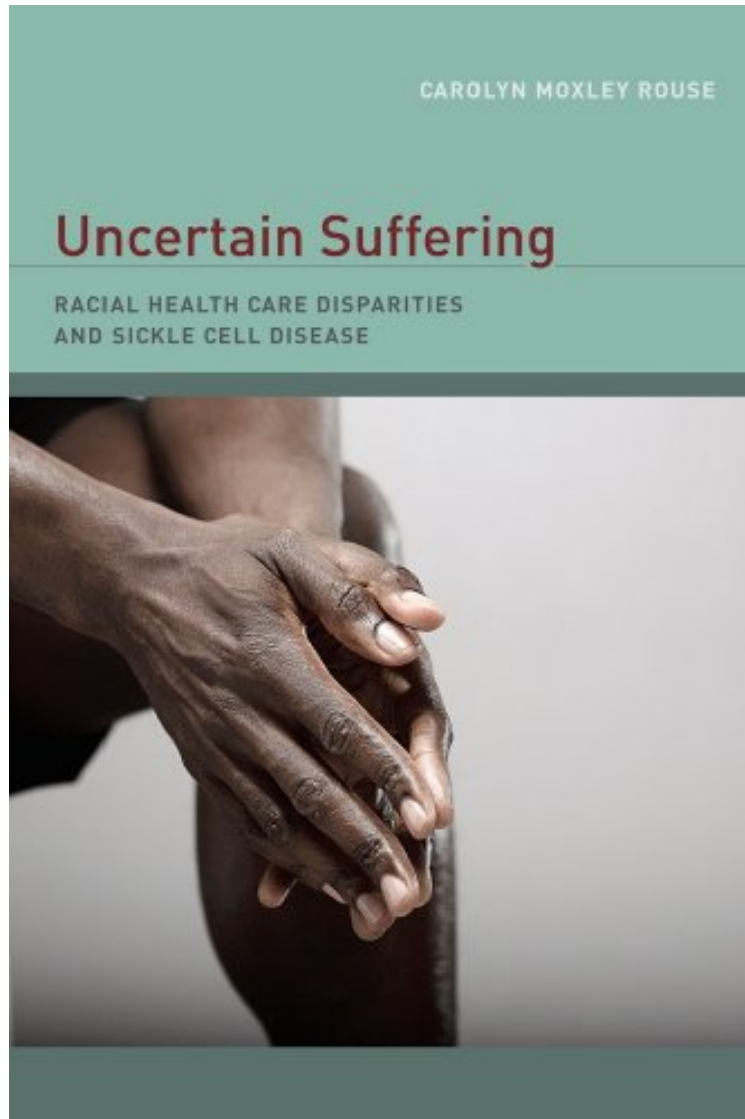


Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease

Carolyn Rouse

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Carolyn Rouse : Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease:

On average, black Americans are sicker and die earlier than white Americans. *Uncertain Suffering* provides a richly nuanced examination of what this fact means for health care in the United States through the lens of sickle cell anemia, a disease that primarily affects blacks. In a wide ranging analysis that moves from individual patient cases to the compassionate yet distanced professionalism of health care specialists to the level of national policy, Carolyn Moxley Rouse uncovers the cultural assumptions that shape the quality and delivery of care for sickle cell patients. She reveals a clinical world fraught with uncertainties over how to treat black patients given resource limitations and ambivalence. Her book is a compelling look at the ways in which the politics of racism, attitudes toward pain and suffering, and the reliance on charity for healthcare services for the underclass can create disparities in the U.S. Instead of burdening hospitals and clinics with the task of ameliorating these disparities, Rouse argues that resources should be redirected to community-based health programs that reduce daily forms of physical and mental suffering.

From the Inside Flap Within the pages of *Uncertain Suffering* it becomes all too clear that race, class, and age converge to define a powerful triple blow that guarantees both subtle and outrageously obvious health disparities. Rouse moves gracefully from the subjective pain of adolescent patients in crisis, to the compassionate yet distanced professionalism of health care specialists, to the level of national policy, revealing a clinical world fraught with contradictions over how best to treat black, and, all too often, underclass children in pain. *Uncertain Suffering* will make a big splash within anthropology. Lesley Sharp, Barnard College *Uncertain Suffering* will have a unique place in medical anthropology, public health scholarship, and the social sciences of health. It involves a layered and deeply philosophical approach to the limits of the role/ responsibility of modern American medicine to address the suffering of African American patients. Rayna Rapp, New York University