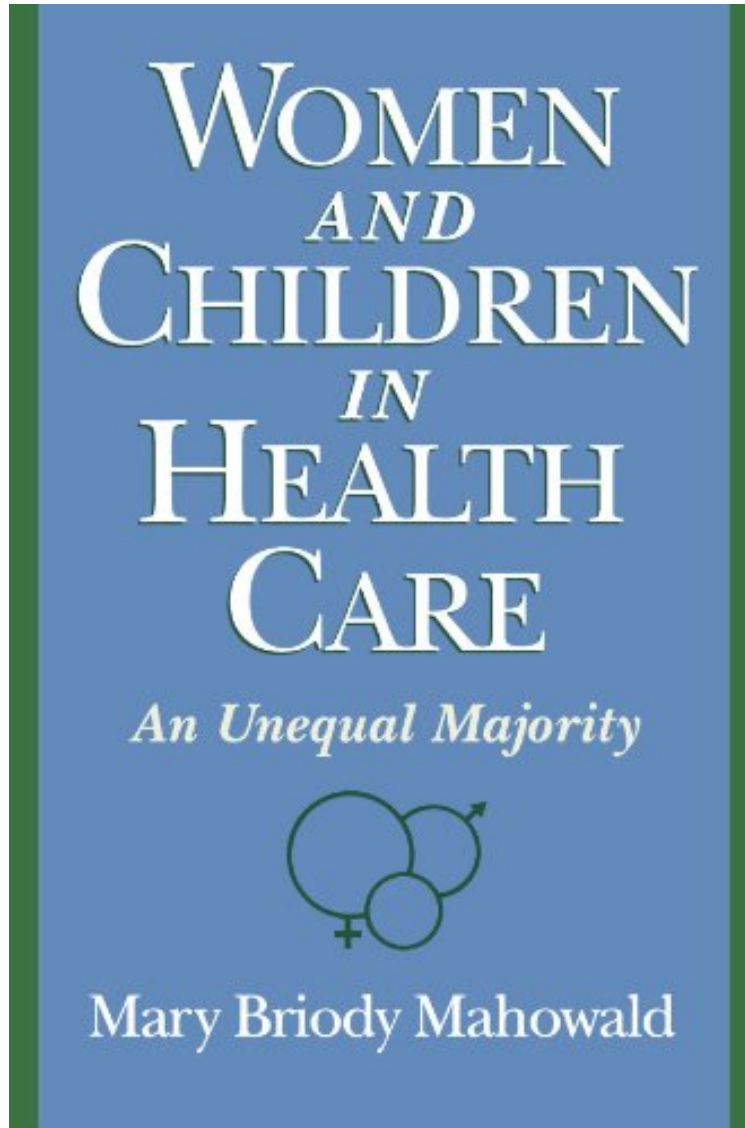


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## Women and Children in Health Care: An Unequal Majority

*Mary Briody Mahowald*

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**Mary Briody Mahowald : Women and Children in Health Care: An Unequal Majority** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women and Children in Health Care: An Unequal Majority:

The ideal of equality constitutes a criterion for assessing current practice through attention to differences among individuals and groups. Inequality occurs when irrelevant differences are invoked in order to secure power or

advantages over others. This book examines health care issues from an egalitarian perspective, focusing particularly on those that affect the lives of women and children. These are some of the most hotly debated, controversial, yet genuinely humanitarian issues of our time. They include gender stereotypes in medicine and in adolescent socialization, fertility curtailment and enhancement, coercive treatment during pregnancy, fetal tissue transplantation, decisions regarding newborns, decision-making by minors, the feminization of poverty and its impact on women's and children's health, and the meaning and role of "family" in health care decisions. The book describes a case-based or "feminine" model of reasoning as appropriate to the health care setting, but also as a possible rationale for exploitation of women. Different versions of feminism are clearly explained and specifically related to care-based reasoning. To overcome the pitfalls of paternalism and excessive stress on patient autonomy, a concept of "parentalism" is defended. An egalitarian perspective, the author claims, involves use of one's power to empower others. Because of the timeliness of the topics discussed, and the depth of detail, this book will be necessary reading for all bioethicists, health-care analysts and policy-makers, and women's studies researchers.

"Among the best. Her analysis demonstrates her expertise in both philosophical ethics and clinical medicine.... An important addition to the bioethics literature. It should be in the library of every health sciences center. We should be grateful to Mary Briody Mahowald for reminding us what health care is supposed to be about and how far we still have to go to get there." --Bruce D. Weinstein, Ph.D., NEJM"Very valuable and stimulating. Her thesis is sharp, well thought out, and challenging, and covers the range of issues. These issues lie at the heart of many of the social controversies we are struggling with today. Stimulating reading for all those interested in women and children's health care issues." --Choice"Represents a significant contribution to the literature on medical ethics and maternal and child health care.... Mahowald provides a stimulating and thoughtful discussion of controversial issues confronting women and children in our current health care system. The book is insightful, provocative, and well-written." --Patricia A. Marshall, PhD (Loyola Univ Medical Center), Doody's Journal"A thorough, well-documented analysis and discussion of a wide range of issues. . . . this is a book with relevance for all practitioners." --Annals of Internal Medicine"Should be required reading...for those who are uneasy about the moral environment of contemporary medical practice.... Takes a major step toward remedying the child neglect characteristic of recent moral philosophy.... She covers an enormous amount of ground in a relatively short space....[a] courageous and important book." --Laura M. Purdy, PhD (Wells College), JAMA"[Mahowald] considers selective reproductive and child health care issues from an interesting perspective. The author...brings experience, gained through years of experience in the clinical arena, to the ideas set forth in her book.... [Mahowald] provides a cursory discussion of theories that create the structure for egalitarian perspective that is applied to issues in ensuing chapters.... This volume is written for a physician audience to stimulate new lines of thought about issues that are important to women. The discussion of reproductive issues from multiple philosophical perspectives is thought provoking....[Women and Children in Health Care] has the potential to stimulate thought for new directions and visions for the health care of women." --Louise M. Wulff, Director of Research for the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, WHI (Women's Health Issues - published by Elsevier Science?)"A strength of this book lies in the avoidance of inflexible rules or principles and the examination of complex issues from a broad range of viewpoints in conjunction with the egalitarian perspective....The author does not reduce complex issues to simplistic solutions but explores them thoroughly....Will be of interest to nurses....to faculty teaching or students in women's health or biomedical ethics courses....or to anyone interested in ethical aspects of health care for women and children....A well-organized and thoughtful exploration of the ethical issues that confront the women and children cared for by obstetric, gynecologic, and neonatal nurses. It would be an excellent reference for educators and practitioners." --Mary K. Shannahan, RN, PhD (School of Nursing, Florida State University, Tallahassee), Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing"Mahowald provides an insightful philosophical description of an egalitarian perspective for moral reasoning and ethical decision-making in health care....[She] effectively argues that the differences between men and women and between children and adults have led to inequalities....In light of the pharmacy profession's acceptance of pharmaceutical care as its mission, this book provides an excellent analysis and presentation of an ethic of caring in balance with an ethic for just treatment. Pharmacists in any practice environment will benefit from reading this book twice-once for its essence and once for reflection and application to their own professional practices. Students of ethics, feminism, communication, socialization, medical sociology, and sociology of the professions will find the book worthwhile reading." --Jean M.B. Woodward, PhD, University of Iowa, American Journal of Hospital Pharmacy"Mahowald offers a uniquely helpful and genuinely distinguished contribution to the literatures of moral theory, political theory, feminist theory and practical ethics. Women and Children in Health Care should not be missed by anyone with interests in any of these areas." --Ethics"A practical approach to bioethical problem-solving that favors middle level guidelines over abstract principles."-- Anne Donchin, Indiana UniversityAbout the AuthorMary Briody Mahowald is Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the College, and Assistant Director of the Center for Clinical Medical Ethics of the University of Chicago.