

(Download) How Cancer Crossed the Color Line

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Keith Wailoo

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Keith Wailoo : How Cancer Crossed the Color Line before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How Cancer Crossed the Color Line:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fabulous Book! Lots of clarity about racial issues in the depiction of cancer. By Nic McThis is really one of my favorite books on cancer. As a breast cancer survivor and blogger, I noticed a few differences within the cancer community when it came to issues of race. This book brought so much clarity and understanding to me about how we got to where we are in the discussion of cancer and it shows how far we have to

go. Well-researched and well-written. I am so thankful for this book. I recommend it to cancer survivors all the time. (if they're interested in learning more about the community)

In the course of the 20th century, cancer went from being perceived as a white woman's nemesis to a "democratic disease" to a fearsome threat in communities of color. Drawing on film and fiction, on medical and epidemiological evidence, and on patients' accounts, Keith Wailoo tracks this transformation in cancer awareness, revealing how not only awareness, but cancer prevention, treatment, and survival have all been refracted through the lens of race. Spanning more than a century, the book offers a sweeping account of the forces that simultaneously defined cancer as an intensely individualized and personal experience linked to whites, often categorizing people across the color line as racial types lacking similar personal dimensions. Wailoo describes how theories of risk evolved with changes in women's roles, with African-American and new immigrant migration trends, with the growth of federal cancer surveillance, and with diagnostic advances, racial protest, and contemporary health activism. The book examines such powerful and transformative social developments as the mass black migration from rural south to urban north in the 1920s and 1930s, the World War II experience at home and on the war front, and the quest for civil rights and equality in health in the 1950s and '60s. It also explores recent controversies that illuminate the diversity of cancer challenges in America, such as the high cancer rates among privileged women in Marin County, California, the heavy toll of prostate cancer among black men, and the questions about why Vietnamese-American women's cervical cancer rates are so high. A pioneering study, *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* gracefully documents how race and gender became central motifs in the birth of cancer awareness, how patterns and perceptions changed over time, and how the "war on cancer" continues to be waged along the color line.

From Publishers Weekly
Wailoo (*The Troubled Dream of Genetic Medicine*) uses breast cancer as a prism to look at how gender, race, and economic class not only determines the availability of medical treatment but also the way disease is defined. Referencing literary and medical sources, he shows how views of cancer have changed over the course of a century; statistics from the 1920s, for instance, showed that affluent white women had the highest mortality rate from cancer, having moved from ninth place at the beginning of the century, to sixth. One explanation given at the time was a "growing female political and economic independence" that allowed them to have fewer children and to bottle feed rather than nurse them. By contrast, blacks were considered to be leading a more natural, "primitive" existence believed at the time to be free of the "stresses of modern life" and intrinsically healthier. Urbanization and the Civil Rights movement introduced reforms like Medicare and Medicaid, opening treatment to the poor; the statistical gap has steadily decreased since. Wailoo also explores the transformation of the paternalistic doctor/patient relationship from the 1920s—when doctors routinely lied to patients with fatal ailments—to the present. A nuanced study of a complex subject. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. "Wailoo takes what already would have been an interesting, straightforward account of how racial perceptions of cancer changed over time and elevates it to a moving and humane examination of cancer's role in shaping American identity." --*Journal of American History* "The sensitive, nuanced history under review thus fills a crucial gap in our understanding of the interrelationships between medical history and U.S. social history. Wailoo has superbly integrated a broad mass of historical sources into a coherent and compelling narrative. Particularly interesting throughout the book is Wailoo's analysis of the shifting meaning of 'race' throughout the 20th century as exemplified in discussions about cancer. In today's world of widespread disparities research and increasing genomic analysis, we need more of this sort of sophisticated analysis." --Joel Howell, *Journal of Social History* "Wailoo reminds us of how American culture has shaped our awareness of this disease and why knowing this history matters. His book provides a very useful, teachable, and thoughtful commentary on America's endless war on cancer; that war's more hidden racial and gender dimensions; and some of the reasons why we often seem, despite the endless media hyping of breakthroughs, not to be winning this struggle." --Susan M. Reverby, *Health Affairs* "Keith Wailoo is the premier historian of the politics of medicine in America as it relates to the doings and sufferings of Black people. This book is a gem; it is vintage Wailoo—brilliant, rigorous and relevant!" --Cornel West, Princeton University "A model of how to seamlessly weave together the complex intersectionality of class, gender and race. *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* is a masterful account of how the reward structures of science funding, the profession of medicine, era-specific cultural stereotypes of women's 'proper place,' and shifting notions of racialized bodies have all converged to shape our views of who is at risk for cancer, and why." --Troy Duster, New York University "Keith Wailoo deftly and provocatively places medical and public health studies into conversation with films, novels, and autobiographical narratives. In so doing, he offers a stunning historical account of the dramatic shifts in popular and epidemiological consciousness about cancer and racial difference. It is an account that provides a much-needed historical context to contemporary debates in the genomic sciences about race and racial difference." --Michael Omi, University of California, Berkeley "Illuminating changing scientific and popular conceptions about who is at risk of cancer and why, *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* compellingly argues that the answer to this question—and the epidemiologic data that underpins it—are together shaped as much if not more by the racial, class, gender and broader political ideologies and conflicts of the times as by the actual occurrence—detected or not—of cancer itself.

Offering rich detail and insightful examples, Wailoo provides an eye-opening account of the making and contesting of scientific knowledge that is essential reading for anyone engaged in cancer research, prevention, and treatment or concerned about health inequities more broadly." --Nancy Krieger, Harvard School of Public Health "A nuanced study of a complex subject." --Publishers Weekly About the Author Keith Wailoo is Townsend Martin Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University. He is author of the award-winning book, *Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*.