

## **Book Review**

**Title:** *Hotel Ritz-Comparing Mexican and U.S. Street Prostitutes: Factors in HIV/AIDS Transmission*

**Author:** David J. Bellis, Ph.D.

**Publisher:** The Haworth Press, 2003

ISBN 0-7890-1776-8, 128 pp.

**Cost:** \$18.00 USD

**Title:** *Women's Experiences with HIV/AIDS: Mending Fractured Selves*

**Author:** Desirée Ciambrone, Ph.D.

**Publisher:** The Haworth Press, 2003

ISBN 0-7890-1758-X, 213 pp.

**Cost:** \$20.00 USD

**Reviewers:** J. Gary Linn & Carol Bompat

David Bellis's *Hotel Ritz-Comparing Mexican and U.S. Street Prostitutes* and Desirée Ciambrone's *Women's Experiences with HIV/AIDS* are complementary studies. Together they provide the reader with a continuum of women with HIV and/or at high risk for acquiring HIV. Bellis's work describes the sexual and drug using behavior of street prostitutes in California and Mexico who (particularly those in the United States) are outside of the healthcare system. Ciambrone moves up the social ladder and into the social service and medical care systems. She discusses the life experience of a predominantly white, and educated, group of women who received drug therapy and support for their HIV illness.

Bellis successfully targets policy makers, substance abuse and behavioral AIDS researchers, and caregivers. His rich international data set and insightful sociological analysis of the interrelationship of sex work, drug abuse, and HIV support compelling arguments for the reform of antiprostitution and antidrug laws in the United States. Ciambrone provides valuable information on the lived experience of women with HIV for caregivers and convincing empirical support for the theory of biographical disruption, which should be of considerable interest to medical sociologists and health psychologists.

Bellis increases our understanding of the interdependence of sex work, drug use, and HIV in two distinct social systems in two countries; while Ciambrone helps us to understand the daily lives of HIV infected women in the United States who are provided medical and social services. Both books are extremely interesting for a variety of reasons. Bellis simultaneously works at multiple levels (individual, community, national, and international) and focuses our attention on the critical linkages tying together prostitution, drug abuse, and HIV illness. His analysis is

written from a thought-provoking critical perspective. Ciambrone, with her highly detailed qualitative interviews, provides us with a uniquely intimate view of women's experiences with the problems of stress and coping with HIV. She writes from a sensitive feminist perspective.

Unfortunately, these important studies are not widely accessible to people with disabilities. They have only been published in a regular font size. No large print, Braille, or audio versions are currently available. Although they presently have these limitations, they are both reasonably priced.

We recommend Bellis's book for policy makers at all levels of government, a wide range of substance abuse and behavioral AIDS researchers, and caregivers and social service providers. It should be especially useful for persons working in the criminal justice system.

We recommend Ciambrone's monograph for social science researchers working in HIV/AIDS; especially those interested in qualitative research, feminism, and women's health issues. It also will be very useful for caregivers (especially those in psychological and support services) and undergraduate and graduate students of nursing, social work, sociology, and public policy.