



GNDR_ST 101 • Amy Partridge

Our Bodies/Ourselves: Women's Health Movements Then and Now

The U.S. 1970s Women's Health Movement demanded everything from safe birth control on demand to an end to for-profit healthcare. Some participants formed research collectives and published D-I-Y guides to medical knowledge such as the Boston Women's Health Collective's *Women and Their Bodies* or Carol Downer's *A New View of a Woman's Body*. Some movement members established battered women's shelters, underground abortion referral services, and feminist health clinics. Others formed local committees and national networks, such as the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) and the National Women's Health Network (NWHN), with the goal of transforming contemporary medical protocols and scientific research agendas. Because many of these local and national groups are still in existence, original movement goals continue to define the parameters of a "women's health" agenda in the present moment.

On the other hand, the Women's Health Movement was (and is) a heterogeneous movement. Then, as now, groups with competing ideas about the healthcare needs of women as a group identified as part of same movement. Thus, an examination of historical and current debates over "women's health" is also a means of assessing several distinct, often competing, paradigms of health and disease. Moreover, how we articulate a "women's health agenda" depends on our (often taken-for-granted) ideas about gender, sexuality, and embodiment itself.

TU/TH 2-3:20pm • University Hall 218

