

## Book Review

Black, H. K., Groce, J. T., & Harmon, C. E. (2017). *The hidden among the hidden: African-American elder male caregivers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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The title of this book points to the purpose and need for this book—there are pictures that we hold in our heads of what an informal caregiver is, mostly female, a wife or daughter or daughter-in-law. Males as caregivers are “hidden caregivers” despite providing 40% of informal caregiving (p. xvii). Currently, there is even less known about elder African-American male caregivers; they truly are “the hidden among the hidden.”

The book answers the question, “What is the experience of being an elder African-American male caregiver?” To understand this, the authors tell us we need to fully appreciate that “experiences of racism and caregiving are intertwined” (p. xvii). This book meets a need—there is not much known or written about African-American older men who are caregivers. The authors let the experts, the elder men they interviewed who provide this care, speak for themselves.

Two coauthors (Groce and Harmon) have very important things in common with the respondents. These commonalities allow for the authors to not only write about African-American elder caregivers, but to tell their stories with understanding. Groce and Harmon are African-American males who share a history of growing up in a segregated society, having lived in a large city and having also been caregivers in comparable situations themselves. Much emphasis is rightly given to the marginalized existence of elder black men who grew up in segregation and the experiences of disenfranchisement and meeting challenges in a

racially biased culture. The authors use narrative inquiry to perform their qualitative research, using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. With these, they create an ethnographic narrative of the 13 African-American elder caregiver respondents living in Philadelphia. The interviews are broken down into chapters that cover the topics of identity in caregiving, caregiving and generativity, experiences of suffering, strategies of coping in suffering and caregiving, African-American men’s belief systems, caregiving as pilgrimage, and addressing the silence (of African-American men and caregiving).

This book is an excellent resource for qualitative research students, a gerontological social work or gerontology reader, among other studies. There is real magic in the narratives of men who have lived in a largely shared but unspoken historical epoch, being African-American in a segregated America, meeting challenges then that in many ways they are still meeting today. They are continuing a history of caregiving—taking care of themselves and people like them with the resources they have. The authors have written a wonderful ethnography of elder African-American caregivers that provides a historical framework for the ethos of caregiving for a population about which almost nothing is known. This book makes great strides to change that.