



What if many major diseases leading to human misery and death could be reduced or minimized by an overlooked factor well within our control?

What if genetics and aging were only part of the picture—not even the main players—in triggering hypertension, cardiovascular disease, obesity, addiction and emotional illness?

BASIC

BOOKS

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Scared Sick is the first book to reveal how fear, experienced chronically in early childhood lies at the root of many common physical diseases as well as emotional, and behavioral pathologies. Building upon recent revelations about the core physical systems governing health, especially the inseparable relationship between the brain, endocrine and immune systems, the book identifies routine societal practices that—while unintentional—are traumatic to developing nervous systems.

Our innate “fight or flight” mechanism, which originally evolved as a protective response to acute life threatening events, can become an agent of death in an environment chronically stimulated by fear. Imbalances in immune and endocrine function are a common result of exposure to such conditions, particularly if they occur when fundamental physiology is just forming in earliest childhood, including the nine months before birth—all outside of our conscious awareness. Invisible to the naked eye, the chemistry of fear quietly levels its toll in our organs and vital functions, the specifics being tailored by individual genetics.

Scared Sick unveils a previously unseen force underlying heart disease, diabetes, obesity, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue and pain, some forms of arthritis, osteoporosis, and a host of emotional and behavioral illnesses including addiction, anxiety and depression. The book connects the dots between extraordinarily complex strands of research that are just emerging from psychology, neurobiology, endocrinology, immunology and genetics. Written in an easy to read manner, many stories are woven throughout. The book makes it clear that building modulated nervous systems in youngest human beings is foundational not only for individual physical and behavioral health but also for maintaining the “glue” of human community and the continuity of the species.

Understanding this equation offers the opportunity for readers to take a deeper and far more productive role in healing trauma in their own lives. The final chapters guide readers to implications and solutions for themselves and the children they love. Few variables unite us as a species more than the fundamental desire to “feel good” during our sojourn on the planet. ***Scared Sick*** is written to enhance this potential.



The Authors

Robin Karr-Morse is a family therapist in private practice. She is the former Director of Parents Training for the Oregon Child Welfare System and served as the first Executive Director of the Oregon Children's Trust Fund, the state's major effort to prevent child abuse statewide. She has served as a consultant to Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints Program and as a lecturer on the Brazelton Seminar Faculty. She lives in Portland, Oregon.



Meredith S. Wiley is the State Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York and an advocate for preventive social policy. She lives in Albany, New York. Karr-Morse and Wiley are coauthors of *Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence*.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

"This is an information-packed book....The authors do make a very persuasive case that preventive measures should be taken to eliminate or mitigate early trauma."

—***Publishers Weekly***

"Karr-Morse and Wiley have done it again! *Scared Sick* raises many profound and urgent questions about how stress during the earliest moments of our lives—in utero and out in the world—can create lasting negative impacts on the health of our bodies and minds."

—**Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Executive Director, Mindsight Institute, Clinical Professor, UCLA School of Medicine, and author of *Mindsight***

"*Scared Sick* is useful, highly readable, scientifically advanced, and relevant to all of us in better understanding our lives, especially how our earliest life experiences can translate into health and disease over the decades. Another impressive book by Robin Karr-Morse with Meredith Wiley."

—**Vincent J. Felitti, MD, Founder, The California Institutes of Preventive Medicine**

"A splendid blend of sense and science."

—**David Lawrence, Jr., President of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and former publisher of *The Miami Herald***

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