



# **The Impotence Epidemic: Men's Medicine and Sexual Desire in Contemporary China (Critical Global Health: Evidence, Efficacy, Ethnography)**

*Everett Yuehong Zhang*

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Since the 1990s China has seen a dramatic increase in the number of men seeking treatment for impotence. Everett Yuehong Zhang argues in *The Impotence Epidemic* that this trend represents changing public attitudes about sexuality in an increasingly globalized China. In this ethnography he shifts discussions of impotence as a purely neurovascular phenomenon to a social one. Zhang contextualizes impotence within the social changes brought by recent economic reform and through the production of various desires in post-Maoist China. Based on interviews with 350 men and their partners from Beijing and Chengdu, and concerned with de-mystifying and de-stigmatizing impotence, Zhang suggests that the impotence epidemic represents not just trauma and suffering, but also a contagion of individualized desire and an affirmation for living a full life. For Zhang, studying male impotence in China is one way to comprehend the unique experience of Chinese modernity.

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