

# Preface

The impetus for this volume comes from the growing recognition of health disparities in the Latino population. The last two decades have witnessed a rapid increase in the number of survey-based and epidemiological studies of the health profiles of Hispanic adults in general, and of the causes of disparities between minorities and people of Mexican origin in particular. From the perspective of these studies, healthful aging consists of the absence of disease, or at least of the most serious preventable diseases and their intended and unintended consequences. The findings consistently reveal a serious African–American and Mexican-origin disadvantage in terms of healthful aging. Because a greater proportion of Latinos will be turning 65 early in this century, especially those from Mexico and Central America, the issue of the impact of the impending growth is of great significance, and thus the focus of attention in this volume.

The chapters in this volume are based on a compilation of papers commissioned for the international Conference on Aging in the Americas (CAA) held at the University of Texas at Austin. The CAA was established in 2001, and like the first three conferences, the fourth installment of the CAA builds on previous work by looking at Latino healthful aging, but with a particular focus on the interaction of functional capacity and social factors as they affect individual and group health levels, and their effect on caregiving systems. Although there is a budding literature on Hispanic elders in the United States, few of these publications offer the breadth and depth contained in this book. The first book, *The Health of Aging Hispanics: The Mexican-Origin Population* contains the important influences of biology, behavioral and social factors on health conditions and diseases in later life and contains papers presented at the 2005 CAA. This book, *Aging, Health and Longevity in the Mexican-Origin Population*, is the second volume in the series. Stemming from the 2010 conference, the volume addresses many of these issues within a social and cultural context and identify the unique concerns facing Latino elders in this country at large, as well as along the U.S./Mexico border and in Mexico.

The chapters are wide ranging and directly explore aging populations in the Americas that have considerable implications for all aspects of health and long-term care, including human security, and social protective systems throughout the Americas.

Even though older people of Mexican origin have traditionally remained in the community either in their own homes or those of children even when they suffer significant declines in health, their ability to do so in the future will be affected by demographic and economic changes that influence the family's ability to provide intensive and ongoing care. The contributors present a sophisticated examination of the multifaceted health-related concerns facing Hispanic families and caregivers in late life with a bi-national treatment.

Each scholar whose work appears in this volume is a noted expert. Several criteria were considered when inviting the select group of scholars to contribute to the edited collection. The authors were selected because of their extensive experience and publications in the field of Latino health and aging with multiple citations on the topic of their paper. The contributors are noted experts, with a particular emphasis on the study of health among Mexican-origin populations. Additionally, at least one of the investigator's program of research is 5 years or older. What follows next is Chap. 1 by Jacqueline Angel, Fernando Torres-Gil, and Kyriakos Markides. The Introduction presents a synthetic overview of the book and describes how various chapters are tied to the conference series theme of the trajectory of disability and long-term care for older Mexican-origin people from a bi-national perspective.

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Aging, Health, and Longevity in the Mexican-Origin  
Population

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2012, XXVIII, 348 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4614-1866-5