



Normal at Any Cost: Tall Girls, Short Boys, and the Medical Industry's Quest to Manipulate Height

Susan Cohen, Christine Cosgrove

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A fascinating story of medical experimentation, parental love, and the extreme measures taken to make children fit within ?the norm.?

Most people rarely think about their height beyond a little wishing and hoping. But for the parents of children who are ridiculed by their peers for being extraordinarily tall or extraordinarily short, height can cause great anguish. For decades, the medical establishment has responded to these worries by prescribing controversial treatments and therapies for children who fall outside of the ?normal? height range. While some have benefited, many have suffered from devastating side effects.

In this riveting book, Susan Cohen and Christine Cosgrove provide a voice for the parents, doctors, scientists, and pharmaceutical companies involved in these experimental treatments. They also tell the story of the boys and girls themselves, many of them now grown, who were subjected to a wide range of non-FDA-approved medical procedures. These treatments? which consisted of extreme doses of estrogen, pituitary glands taken from both animals and human cadavers, and testosterone injections?often had disastrous side effects.

Who is to say how tall is too tall, and how short is too short? For many of the individuals represented in this book, the answers have been clear?and they are grateful to the medical industry for improving upon nature. For others, left in the wake of this same science, the answers are fueled by tragic regret. The authors explore the dueling motives behind these procedures? with parents desperate to help their children ?fit in? and doctors and scientists hungry for scientific breakthroughs. Combining extensive research and in-depth interviews, *Normal at Any Cost* is the first book to place a human face on this complex and ethically charged medical history.

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