



# Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem, 1936-1968 (Rochester Studies in Medical History)

*Dennis A Doyle*

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Toward the middle of the twentieth century, African Americans in New York City began to receive increased access to mental health care in some facilities within the city's mental health system. This study documents how and why this important change in public health-and in public opinion on race-occurred. Drawing on records from New York's children's courts, Harlem's public schools, Columbia University, and the Department of Hospitals, Dennis Doyle tells here the story of the American psychiatrists and civil servants who helped codify in New York's mental health policies the view that blacks and whites are psychological equals. The book examines in particular the events through which these racial liberals working in Harlem gained a foothold within New York's public institutions, creating inclusive public policies and ostensibly race-neutral standards of care. Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem, 1936-1968 not only contributes to the growing body of historiography on race and medical institutions in the civil rights era but, more importantly, shows how inveterate racial prejudices within public policy can be overcome. Dennis A. Doyle is assistant professor of history at the Saint Louis College of Pharmacy.

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