



Healers' Roles in Rural Senegal's Healthcare System: A Qualitative Study of Traditional Healers' Influence

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Abstract

Traditional healers play a significant role in rural healthcare systems across Senegal, particularly in addressing non-communicable diseases and mental health issues where conventional medical services are limited. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with 30 traditional healers and community members in two rural regions of Senegal to gather insights on their roles and interactions within the healthcare system. The findings indicate that traditional healers primarily focus on treating ailments such as hypertension, diabetes, and mental health issues like depression. They often work alongside formal healthcare providers but have limited access to medical resources. Traditional healers in rural Senegal serve a critical role in providing care for underserved populations, despite facing challenges related to resource availability and integration into the formal healthcare system. Given their significant contribution, efforts should be made to enhance traditional healers' access to medical resources and improve their training to better support patients within the broader healthcare framework.

Keywords: African geography, qualitative research, cultural anthropology, community health, ethnomedicine, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism

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