



Healers' Roles within Rural Senegal's Healthcare System: A Mixed-Methods Exploration

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Abstract

Traditional healing practices have been integral to healthcare systems in rural Senegal for generations. The role of traditional healers (THs) is multifaceted and often complementary to formal medical care. The study employs a combination of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Interviews were conducted in local languages to ensure cultural sensitivity, while surveys aimed at quantifying TH patients' proportions seeking care from formal medical sources. Data analysis revealed that over 60% of TH patients reported consulting both traditional healers and healthcare facilities for various ailments, suggesting a significant integration of traditional practices into modern health systems. Traditional healers play a crucial role in rural Senegalese healthcare by providing essential services to underserved populations. Their involvement is especially evident among older adults and those with chronic conditions. Healthcare policies should recognise the value of THs, potentially integrating them into formal care delivery systems without compromising their traditional roles and practices.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, African, Socio-Cultural, Ethnographic, Qualitative, Quantitative, Indigenous*

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