

Review of: "“Healing is having faith in Allah, the healer, and the medicine”: An exploratory qualitative study of Islamic-based healing practices in Northern Ghana"

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This study explores Islamic healing practices among the Dagomba in Northern Ghana, delving into the integration of Islamic teachings, traditional beliefs, and modern medical practices. It emphasizes the spiritual, social, and physical aspects of healing within the community. Healers, predominantly male and from various socio-economic backgrounds, blend knowledge from Islamic teachings, traditional Dagomba practices, and personal experiences, employing methods such as prayers, herbs, and walgu (Quranic-infused water). The crucial role of faith in Allah, trust in the healing process, and belief in the healer's abilities is underscored, with the concept of healing as luck being influenced by both Islamic and Dagomba beliefs, indicating that outcomes are ultimately determined by divine will.

The Dagomba people exhibit medical pluralism, often navigating between traditional, Islamic, and biomedical treatments based on the nature of the illness and their beliefs. This includes health shopping, where patients visit multiple healers across different medical systems. The study aligns with Islamic ontological perspectives, suggesting strong faith as essential for protection from spiritual illnesses, resonating with the Dagomba's understanding of illness causation and healing. Ritual practices, often influenced by Dagbon culture, such as fasting, cleanliness, and sacrifices, are significant in the healing process, serving both preventive and curative purposes.

Gender dynamics are also observed in these practices, with women primarily managing illnesses at home due to cultural perceptions regarding the female body and spirituality in Dagomba society. The importance of accurate diagnosis, especially for spiritual illnesses, is emphasized for establishing a healer's credibility, with diverse diagnostic methods enabling healers to address both physical and spiritual ailments effectively. The study acknowledges the efficacy of modern medicine for certain conditions, indicating a pragmatic approach to healthcare while highlighting tensions and perceptions between biomedical practitioners and traditional healers.

The study, however, is limited by its small sample size and focus on male Muslim healers, suggesting that including female healers could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic healing practices in Dagomba culture. In conclusion, Islamic healing in Dagbon reflects a unique blend of religious beliefs, cultural practices, and modern medical knowledge. The healers' practices encompass spiritual, preventive, and curative approaches, highlighting the complex nature of healthcare in the region and suggesting further research for a deeper understanding and potential integration

into Ghana's healthcare system.