

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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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this work. I found the paper very interesting, well written, with an appropriate analysis of the literature and the scientific method used.

Below are some minor revisions that I hope will be helpful in further improving the work.

Abstract

- The summary of the results could be more discursive. At present, some summarising statements are a little too assertive. A more general and harmonious discourse would probably be more interesting for the reader.

Introduction

- I recommend moving this sentence to the beginning of the introduction, directly after the mention of jinn : this would help a less experienced reader to immediately understand what it is about:

“The jinn are spiritual beings believed to be created from fire according to Islamic cosmology (see Laughlin, 2015 for details).”

- It would be clearer to the reader if you made this statement more explicit because at the moment it is slightly vague

“Moreover, spiritual therapy in faith-based medical systems is deemed significant in many faith-based therapies (Abdul Rahman et al., 2019).”

- Reading these questions, it is not so straightforward to subsequently navigate the results you find. I recommend more specificity on these questions.

“The following questions were explored: (1) How is Islamic healing practiced among the Dagomba? (2) How does the Dagomba culture and health beliefs influence Islamic-based healing?”

The Dagomba and Their Health Beliefs

- I would exclude the following sentence because it is repetitive in my view.

“This study is about Islamic healing in Dagbon, a traditional region for the Dagomba.”

- As written, from the following sentence is not immediate understand that Sunni are the majority. It could be that all these three represent the majority

“Different Islamic sects exist in Dagbon, including Shites, Ahmadiyya Muslims, and the Sunni (Tijaniya and Quadiriya), constituting the majority of the Muslim population in Dagbon)”

- From this point on (end of pag 5), I recommend creating a paragraph entitled Rational of the study or current study to make clear what the objective of the study is

“The Dagomba theories of health and illness (Kwame, 2016a) constituted this study's theoretical framework for data...”

Methods and Study Design

- To harmonize the discourse, I recommend moving the following sentence after the reference Hunter et al. 2019.

“Descriptive exploratory research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) allowed us to document, describe, and reflect on the Islamic-based healers’ healing practices, medical philosophies, and therapeutics.”

Data Collection

- In order to better organise all the interesting and useful information you have provided between the sections on participants and data collection, I suggest moving the information on the place and period of data collection to the part on recruitment. Also, I would move the part in the procedure that states that all participants are male. Finally, I would move the sentence about the ethics committee to the end of the section on data collection.

Data Analysis

- Regarding the following sentences, it would be interesting know something more about how you create these codes. Furthermore,

“segments. Unique codes (e.g., medicines, beliefs, rituals, practices) were grouped into categories and developed into themes. Themes were built around the healers’ medical beliefs, spiritual practices, gendered perceptions, and healing knowledge acquisition.”

- About the following sentenc, I would like to know more information about this decision to interview again some

participants. Why did you do that? How many participants have been interviewed again?

“Furthermore, to enhance data trustworthiness, we interviewed some participants more than once, during which they offered us reflexive feedback on their previous interview transcripts, the emergent codes and categories, and provided more data afterward”

Results

Participants Demographics

- Could you add the standard deviations to the mean age? This would eliminate the sentence about how many participants are below the mean age. Also, given that your sample consists of 6 participants, it might be useful to create a table summarizing key sociodemographic information (while respecting privacy, of course).
- Regarding the results, I recommend explaining the main theme in a few lines before illustrating the sub-themes (e.g., Basis of Healing in Islam). This can help the reader better understand the results you have just reported.

Discussion

- I recommend starting discussions with a brief summary of why this work was done otherwise the reader may struggle to read the various arguments right away