

# 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.

**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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## COMMENTS

**Suggested Title:** Islamic-based healing practices among healers in the Yendi Municipality of Ghana: An exploratory study.

The study was only conducted in **one municipality in the Northern Region** and **NOT** the entire Northern Ghana, which involves the Upper West, Upper East, North East, and part of the Brong Ahafo regions. Hence, to suggest that the study setting is Northern Ghana is too broad.

## ABSTRACT

1. The authors identified an exploratory qualitative study as the approach in the title and indicated that **an ethnographic study was used**. These two **approaches** are not the same, and the authors could clearly indicate which one was actually used in the work.
2. In the introduction of the abstract, the authors should avoid the use of **ethnicity** like Dagomba, linking it to Islam. There are Dagombas as an ethnic group in Ghana who are not Muslims and hence may not believe in the Islamic faith.
3. **Method of data collection:** The authors should clearly state which data collection tool was used since the in-depth interview guide and the semi-structured interview guide are not the same. Did the authors include the observation method?????????
4. **Results:** Thematic and narrative syntheses are not the same, and authors should reconsider using one as was done in the work.
5. Qualitative studies cannot establish an **association**, and hence a statement like... The study found that rituals and sacrifices are significant healing practices with specific gendered perspectives is misleading, and hence should be reframed.

6. **Recommendation:** The authors should reconsider writing that part of the study.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Authors should reconsider writing the introduction of the paper. The term **āfa** as used in the paper is a **misnomer**. “Afa” is a general terminology used especially in the Dagbon and Nanumba Vicinity, often referring to someone with knowledge such as a teacher, someone with the skills of writing Islamic scripts for people who may not be healers, and others with spiritual powers). To use the term narrowly in this context is misleading.
2. The introduction of the paper should start broadly with what Islamic healing is and having faith in Allah. The authors may narrow it within the African context, Ghana, and narrow it to the Yendi Municipality.
3. The authors identified a statement like this... “Although a few studies have examined Dagbon traditional medical practices among the Dagomba of Northern Ghana”.... Can the authors mention a few of such studies in Northern Ghana?
4. More importantly, the authors should NOT confuse culture and spirituality. The two terms are not the same

## Methods and Study Design

1. Kindly check the study approach: There is nothing like a descriptive exploratory qualitative design... Check for the appropriate term and apply it accordingly based on the scholarly consultations done in empirical literature.

## Participants and Sampling

1. With the description authors provided under this theme, it would have been appropriate to use SNOWBALL SAMPLING instead of purposive sampling. If indeed the purposive sampling method was applied, could the authors explain which type of purposive sampling method was used?????
2. Since the authors are interested in the use of “ethnographic,” could they explain the difference between observation as a method of data collection and ethnographic observations as a method of data collection, and reconcile that with the abstract and the entire work?
3. Could the authors reconcile Under **METHODS AND STUDY DESIGN, where it was stated that the design was applied to explore** how “Dagbon culture influences Islamic-based healing,” with this statement ... So, one healer was excluded because he stated that he used both Islamic and Dagbon traditional healing modalities. Although we could have compared his perspectives with the rest of the healers, we felt it was unrealistic to compare just one healer under the subheading??
4. Can the authors back the sample size with scholarly works in the field of qualitative research, such as the numbers in previous works??
5. Can the authors explain the difference between “participant observation” and ethnographic observations as used in the work?? and justify which one was used
6. Can the authors explain this statement:... Observation notes were compared immediately after each observation session to compile and discuss emergent vital topics

## Data Analysis

1. Can the authors explain which method was used... as captured in this statement:.. narrative and thematic analytic approaches

## Results

- Reorganize as either thematic synthesis or narrative synthesis

## Conclusion

1. The conclusion should reflect the topic
2. The recommendations should be targeted. They appear too general

## Overall impression

Authors have done well and should incorporate the suggestions to make it interesting for reading