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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Curanderismo in Argentina: a view to diversity

Curanderismo en Argentina: una visión a la diversidad

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ABSTRACT

Healing practices have existed worldwide in different cultures since ancient times, have influenced throughout history, and are rooted in different cultures, demonstrating their importance in wellness and health care. “Curanderismo” it is a set of practices exercised by healers in a ceremony; it is an ancestral custom perpetuated over the centuries, combining traditional indigenous medicine and folk medicine. Its anthropological position may also incorporate the traditional roles of the healing man and the shaman. The curandero in Argentina country has a deep spiritual and cultural meaning. However, with the advance of the current medina, it is still a valid option, respected by communities or individuals seeking comprehensive care or an approach to healing from the spiritual. Encouraging interdisciplinary contact between healers and traditional practitioners is relevant for exchange, collaboration, and mutual respect to better understand the healing practices and their effectiveness. The curandismo acquires relevance due to the connection of beliefs of social groups because health is understood as a balance of nature and its elements. It is seen as an intermediary between the real and spiritual world. However, it should be appropriately regulated, promoting a regularization to prevent and guarantee the patient’s health, promoting and eliminating barriers with a responsible, ethical approach that can play a valuable role in health care and well-being.

Keywords: Curanderismo; Anthropology; Argentina; Social Practice; Traditional Practitioners.

RESUMEN

Las prácticas curativas han existido en todo el mundo en diferentes culturas desde la antigüedad, han influido a lo largo de la historia y están arraigadas en diferentes culturas, lo que demuestra su importancia en el bienestar y el cuidado de la salud. “Curanderismo” es un conjunto de prácticas ejercidas por curanderos en una ceremonia; es una costumbre ancestral perpetuada a lo largo de los siglos, que combina la medicina tradicional indígena y la medicina popular. Su posición antropológica también puede incorporar los roles tradicionales del curandero y el chamán. El curandero en el país tiene un profundo significado espiritual y cultural. Sin embargo, con el avance de la medina actual, sigue siendo una opción válida, respetada por comunidades o individuos que buscan una atención integral o un acercamiento a la curación desde lo espiritual. Fomentar el contacto interdisciplinario entre curanderos y médicos tradicionales es relevante para el intercambio, la colaboración y el respeto mutuo para comprender mejor las prácticas curativas y su efectividad. El curandismo adquiere relevancia por la conexión de creencias de grupos sociales porque la salud se entiende como un equilibrio de la naturaleza y sus elementos. Se considera un intermediario entre el mundo real y el espiritual. Sin embargo, debe ser regulado adecuadamente, promoviendo una regularización para prevenir y garantizar la salud del paciente, promoviendo y eliminando barreras con un enfoque responsable y ético que puede desempeñar un valioso papel en el cuidado de la salud y el bienestar.

Palabras clave: Curanderismo; Antropología; Argentina; Práctica Social; Médicos Tradicionales.

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INTRODUCTION

Healing practices have existed worldwide in different cultures since ancient times, have influenced throughout history, and are rooted in different cultures, demonstrating their importance in wellness and health care.[1]

It is essential to understand and analyze its traditions from a socio-cultural perspective to understand the context in which it is developed, and away from prejudices and stereotypes and, consequently, we must accept its importance in the context in which it is developed.[2]

DEVELOPMENT

"Curanderismo" it is a set of practices exercised by healers in a ceremony; it is an ancestral custom perpetuated over the centuries, combining traditional indigenous medicine and folk medicine. Its anthropological position may also incorporate the traditional roles of the healing man and the shaman.[3,4]

One of its functions is to provide cures to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual illnesses through herbal treatments, massages, the purification of the spirit and the healing of magical evils with the help of spirits or deities.[5]

The origin of curanderismo in Argentina happened before the colonization. The Spanish conquerors brought it, then the European immigrants and the population impact of Spaniards and Italians stands out; its roots in traditional practices are indigenous peoples inhabited by them. The ritual knowledge of healing was transmitted generationally, despite the influence of Western medicine, and has been preserved over time; its approach is holistic and spiritual.[6]

The role of the healer: The healer is a holistic therapist who treats imbalances that result in disease. He is respected and recognized by the population; they point him out as a specialist in treating different ailments; his role is ambivalent; he not only heals but is also capable of doing damage work.[7]

The healer who performs work with intentions to harm or "evil" is called a "witch doctor" and is a specialist dedicated explicitly to performing damage by order or to perform evil.[8]

The detriment varies, ranging from headaches, blood pressure problems, dementia or insanity, social problems, etc.

For example: "The witchcraft they do to the person, and there are many ways to do witchcraft, for example, how to tell you: I take a picture and turn it upside down and prick it with pins and the person becomes desperate to come, that is already a damage" (1). Another example: "procedure is the "ligature", which prevents male sexual performance outside the relationship to which it is "tied". Such dysfunction usually begins as pain in the legs and arms.[9] The ligation technique involves manipulating the semen, usually collected after sexual intercourse, into an unused white handkerchief tied in three knots and placed under the bed or on the mattress pad. This ensures that the man will only have sex in that bed." (2) (Arteaga, Facundo (2006) Pag.85). However, the pattern above of healers can abuse their position by taking advantage of it to defraud, placing a danger to health, it is essential to establish supervision control to avoid abuses and establish ethical practices.[10]

Influence in Argentina

The diversity is consistent with the broad ethnic and cultural composition. Indigenous peoples such as the Mapuche, Guarani and Quechua keep ancestral healing practices alive, involving medicinal plants, rituals and energetic therapies.[11]

Currently, the influence of the native peoples has such acceptance and respect in the community for their traditions and socio-cultural diversity that is in line with the

In line with this, the first hospital of Mapuche medicine in the province of Neuquén was inaugurated in the Department of Alumine, where the hospice that combines traditional public medicine with Mapuche medicine began to operate.[12]

They live with Mapuche and traditional doctors who work together to such an extent that there is a place in the hospice adapted to make bonfires for the Mapuche healers, for the herbalists and ceremonial space for the Machi.[13]

Machi is an intermediary between the two worlds, the Mapuche world and the supernatural world; the protective spirits give them the power to fight against evil spirits. They protect the welfare of the sick and the community.

Another significant detail for their community is that they will have the orientation of the inpatient beds towards the "west".The Mapuche patients resented that they imposed the location of the beds towards any orientation because, in the west, behind the Andes Mountains, is where the spirit is oriented after its passage through the world at the time of death.[14]

Another widespread influence of the native peoples that transcends the city is the drinking of cane, rue for health, and good fortune; it is such an influence that a few days before the media give news of the arrival on August 1 because, on that day, the tradition is performed.

It consists of drinking an alcoholic beverage that is a mixture of leaves, Paraguayan white cane or gin, which has medicinal properties.[15]

This tradition comes from the north of the country, native peoples of the north as Misiones, Corrientes and emerged at the time of Spanish colonization.

Drinking sugar cane with rue brings good health, scares away bad luck, promotes happiness and removes terrible omens. In addition, thanks are given to the Pachamama (Mother Earth) for her protection, good harvests, good weather and abundance in the soil.[16]

Within the Guarani, people are privileged to know how to make remedies from medicinal plants that treat problems of the gall bladder, kidneys, and bone system and counteract symptoms of COVID-19.[17]

During the first months of the pandemic, many communities had difficulties dealing with Covid-19 due to a lack of knowledge and even mistrust of conventional medicine. In addition to the distance from health centres, traditional medicine was the one that

alleviated the impact of the disease, as they prepared mixtures such as chips, matico, wira-wira, anamu, lemon and honey.[17]

With funding from the European Union, the "Chaco Salud" project was implemented by PAHO and other organizations. Two meetings of representatives, traditional doctors from all over the Bolivian Chaco, were planned to analyze the problems of traditional medicine to reach points of agreement to strengthen the role of traditional doctors and the value of traditional medicine.[18,19]

The traditional Guarani doctors expanded their knowledge thanks to these meetings through training in new traditional herbs. As a result, a more supportive role was generated through the knowledge and work of the community, an improvement in care in the essential services of community childbirth.

CONCLUSIONS

The curandero in our country has a deep spiritual and cultural meaning. However, with the advance of the current medina, it is still a valid option, respected by communities or individuals seeking comprehensive care or an approach to healing from the spiritual.

Encouraging interdisciplinary contact between healers and traditional practitioners is relevant for exchange, collaboration, and mutual respect to better understand the healing practices and their effectiveness.[20]

The curandismo acquires relevance due to the connection of beliefs of social groups because health is understood as a balance of nature and its elements. It is seen as an intermediary between the real and spiritual world. However, it should be appropriately regulated, promoting a regularization to prevent and guarantee the patient's health, promoting and eliminating barriers with a responsible, ethical approach that can play a valuable role in health care and well-being.

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