

Understanding Traditional Healing Practices and the Categories of Practices from Fijian iTaukei's Perspectives

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Abstract : This study takes an in-depth look at how traditional healing practices (THPs) are perceived by the iTaukei people living in villages and periurban areas in Fiji Islands. The research used both qualitative and quantitative knowledge/data gathered from six villages in Viti Levu, Fiji Islands, to determine, first, the perception(s) of THPs among the iTaukei; second, what THPs successfully survive and are still important to the iTaukei way of life; and third, what factors influence the iTaukei's health-seeking behavior or choices between Western and traditional medical systems in their villages. Results confirm that the knowledge healers used to hold to cure common illnesses is now more dispersed and shared with community members; healers/elders' roles in iTaukei villages are important for cultural-spiritual-social causes of illnesses, and for more complex cases, there are specialized iTaukei healers. Recommendations in the form of categories of practices are offered for practitioners to work more effectively and affectively with the iTaukei.

Keywords : iTaukei peoples, traditional healing practices, traditional healers, categories of practice

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