

**Formal and informal medical
Systems and sustainable development
In the Egyptian oasis**

Prof.Dr. Alia Hassan Hussein

*Prof.of Anthropology- faculty of Arts –
Beni- Suef University*

Short Abstract:

Evolving human communities had positive and negative effect on traditional communities which under development. Every community has its informal medical systems depend on its cultural and physical condition for treatment and medicine still use in all oases side by side the new one.

Long Abstract:

In all oasis environmental, physical and geographical conditions in the life of the population interlink and formulate the nature of the community and its social and cultural systems, and the informal medical systems. It also formulates the life of the population and its health and diseases.

The medical systems in corporates popular methods of treatment which rely on local plants and herbs as well as popular beliefs and traditions associated with health and diseases which have some health function closely related to the geological environment.

The communities of all the oasis are under development projects depend evolution ideas and economic growth and change in all the communities and human being response and on all life aspects.

The ecological and cultural conditions have shaped the ethnographic medical systems in the oasis .

Including health and prevention, problems, popular medications, customs and beliefs, behavioral aspects of those in change of treatment and related rituals.

The traditional medical systems still used side by side with modern medications in treating various kinds of diseases.

The aim of this paper is to know :

- 1- The traditional medical systems and its effect on health and diseases.
- 2- The formal medical system.
- 3- The sustainable development and its effect on population health and prevents the diseases.

Name of contributor : *Dr.Aleya Hassan Hussien*

Position: *Prof.of Anthropology- faculty of Arts – Benny sweef University*

Address: *faculty of Arts – Benny sweef University*

Nationality :*egyptian*

Passport Details No Issue: Expiry

Gender : *female*

Date of Birth: *23-1-1934*

Tel: *01005080708*

Cell

Fax

Email: *draleya_hhh@yahoo.com*

Title of Paper : *Formal and informal medical Systems and sustainable development
In the Egyptian oasis.*

Formal and informal medical Systems and sustainable development In the Egyptian oasis

As each place has its distinct environment which is differ from other place. Difference in environment does not lead only to different nature and weather but also to different cultural habits, known diseases, different medical system in treatment and prevention of these diseases. Also rates of prevention differ from one culture to another some of these rates refer to diseases and health belief as there is a relationship between what we do and what we think.

The societies of the Egyptian oases with its cultural specificities that make it different from other desert communities have achieved social development since the 1960s based on idea of economic progress and growth and a constant process of development. Development might have a positive effect worldwide. However, it might have a negative side as well, for what appears to be culturally useful in a certain society might not be the same in the culture of another society. For instance, physical activities might bring about health for the individual and his existence in a particular culture other than another. In this respect, the objectives of this research have been formulated into:

- I. The effect of the geological environment on the formulation of the traditional medical system.
- II. The effect of development and change on the formal medical system.
- III. Sustainable development, health and illness.

This research depend on the medical ecology which is a special approach in medical anthropology that emphasis this study will emphasis on health and diseases in an environmental context. (Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra, Bahariaya and sywa oases) in west south of the Egyptian desert.

(1)

Since the medical systems, whether traditional or formal, are basic components of culture, their form and content reflect patterns from behavior, morals, beliefs and traditions. Every culture develops a related medical system and mutual relations.

The medical behavior of the individual is a constituent of the history of public culture. Therefore, understanding any medical system requires knowledge of this system as part of culture. Illness can be understood only in terms of culture, for illness as a concept of pathology is based on experimentation and laboratory tests. The clinical check is different from illness as a cultural concept based on the belief that the patient they cannot do his work.

Every medical system has prevention and a treatment system, both of which have ties with some beliefs of preventive and the therapeutic medicine based on pathology. While some of these beliefs are related to magic and religion according to which illness is interpreted, others are related to the universe, the supernatural and other creatures that are believed to bring illness.

The rates of prevention and treatment are different among societies. Some of these rates are associated with the common beliefs about health and illness. The division of preventive and therapeutic medicine is unfamiliar in simple, traditional, tribal, and rural communities, where preventive medicine is viewed as individual procedures that appear from the behavior of the individual. Hence, the disease that affects the individual is interpreted as a sign of the anger of gods and the punishment of the ancestors.

The medical system includes the common beliefs about the nature and causes of illness. Also, includes medical institutions, hospitals, medical schools, health system and medical practioners. Health care systems are social systems

based on interactions among people interactions between patients and medical service providers in particular.

(2)

The ecological and cultural conditions have shaped the ethnographic medical systems in the entire oasis.

The geological environment plays a major role in population and distribution of the oasis and villages, it also formulates the life of the people its health condition and disease. The essential element in such distribution is water, so that where is water there are people and life.

Springs and wells constitute the basis of any assembling in the communities of all the oasis.

The oasis are characterized by a desert climate as it lies in the dry part of the African desert, which is considered one of the most barren areas when the temperature reaches 48C°. Water levels have a significant impact in the volume of flowing water. Thus, the lower in the land the more water flows. The size and the density of the population correspond to such conditions, therefore, the population decrease in the north in Kharga oases while increase to south according to the environmental geological conditions in all oases.

Water has a role also in dividing the oasis into a number of independent social unites extending from north to south according to water resources. This has led to extend distances that separate one oasis from another.

The oasis district depend on agriculture which relies on water flowing from wells dug by the natives who also maintain such pressures to secure a constant flow of water, the backbone of their economic activity.

The important crops and plants are date palms, santt trees which are made use in constructing wend shield around springs and wells. Doumm palms which are used in making doors. There are also a number of medicinal plants.

Chemical structure of water in the oases is different from one well to the other in the same area and from one oases to the other, it lacks iodine in all oases.

Water is considered one of the most significant environment aspects that have led to both the improvement of health conditions as well as emergence of some diseases.

The constant flow of water has helped to establish an accurate irrigation system every night and day throughout the year. This leads to continuous efforts through cold winter and summer days. Irrigation works under these land conditions has given rise to some diseases as Rheumatic pain, Tonsillitis and Epistaxis.

Since disease is not evenly distributed among population, there are difference in the frequency of the various diseases in every oasis.

The chemical structure of water has its impact on the type of diseases common in all the oases especially those associated with high proportions of salts and iodine in water as hair problems and skin fissuring, similarly, lack of iodine in water leads to renal and urological problems such as baldder stones.

The chemical composition of water leads to some dental problems due to the high proportions iron concentration in water which makes teeth fragile and lack of iodine creates brownish spots on them.

There are other diseases associated with the desert environment such as epidemic diseases which has varies types of eczema as result of heat and dryness, urticaria, tinea as result of work in irrigation. Ophthalmic diseases are common as result of the hot, sandy and windy weather e.g. cataract and Trachoma.

The change of seasons associated with the emergence of some diseases. In summer low blood pressure becomes common due to the excessive heat. High blood pressure also increase in summer is also the season of gastroenteritis.

The ecological and cultural conditions shaped the medical system including: health conditions and problems, prevention of diseases, folk medicine, customs and beliefs.

It is clear that the environmental conditions are considered the most important and direct factors affecting health and diseases in all the oases.

The medical ethnological system incorporate some popular methods of treatment which rely on plants, herbs as well as popular belief and customs associated with health and disease, which have some intrinsic health function closely related to the geological environment. Among this widespread customs is the practice of relying on water flowing from springs and wells in curing stability, as well as among other diseases especially fever. The patient dips himself / herself into the water of the well, spends a few minutes bathing in it, believing that is completely cured. The child who is slow in walking is also treated with the water of the well to speed it up. Among there popular beliefs is that related to nursing woman's abilities to maintain increase her lactic sources. This is done by throwing part of that milk in the well for three days after which milk will flow from her breast as water dose from the well..

After giving birth, a woman and her baby are bathed in the water, which will maintain their health, the same is applicable a newly couple who must be the early on the first day of their marriage in order to bless their new life and bring them health.

Another widespread belief is that of scattered water which is placed near a newly born on the seventh night of his birth, this water will bring health to all the neighboring relatives.

The physical discrepancies between the inhabitants of one oases and other are attributed of ecological factors, especially that of availability of water.

Determines some physical features of the inhabitants it is around water that people's like beliefs, customs, health conditions are centered.

Some kind of plants and herbs which grown locally are still used in treat various kind of diseases such plants "Al-Handal" which is used in treating Rheumatism and arthritis . Another is the use of a certain kind of dates " Al-Hegleeg" in treating Colics, Diahrea and Diabetes mellitus. "Al-. Doumm palms" is used for dyspepsia and gastritis,"Senamiki" for constipation, "Al-Morer" plant for treatment of cough and high temperature . "Al-Ogool" plant is used in cases of piles and renal inflammations, "Al Ashar" plants fluid extracted from it is useful in treating gum and dental problems. "Al-Makheet" is useful in treating desentery and castor oil in treating wound.

Another kind of plant "Al-Handagoog" is eaten to increase milk flow in the nursing mother. "Al-Sakarn" is used as an anesthetic, where as a sultans extracted from "Al- Santt" trees is sprayed on hewounds to function like sulpha derivatives. In treating dental problems one kind called "Al- quarrad" is used and in dealing with kidney stones a plant called the "Isreali olive" it is believed to be very effective against scorpion toxins.

Pressures, a process which is performed by some uneducated "Practioners" cautery and air cups employed to treating rheumatic pains. In the case of meals, some santt wood is burnt in the special room, which raises its temperature thus, hastening the appearance of rash. This is immediately followed by a drop in the patient's temperature . There are some instances representing popular practices in medicine in the traditional medical system which are closely connected with ecological factors that played a major role in treating diseases like lemon grass plant which used stomach pain.

There is a correlation between diet and diseases; food is the outcomes of the environment traditions and beliefs.

Ecological factors play a major role in this respect, traditions is also important in determine diet and traditional foods which are taken as a symbol of kinship unity. Traditional food had come as a result of adjustment.

Food shortage and malnutrition are associated with certain diseases. These diseases vary in quantity and not quality from one oasis to another.

Among the common diseases in the oases resulting from lack of proteins are ascitis and gastroenteritis. Bad eating habits also lead to irritable colon. Cases of gastric inflammation and hyperacidity were noticed as a result of use of spices, chilly powder and salted cheese.

Dates are considered one of the most important local crops which help keeping the food balanced. This crop is consumed in different ways. It plays an important role resource. All the oasis inhabitants depends on the salt produced from underground water. It is free from iodine; hence it leads to increased incidence of hypothyroidism. The ecological conditions combine with nutrition, health and diseases. Nutritional stresses on man are clearly reflection of ecology culture and biology.e to

Development programs are mainly interested in diseases and its effects on development. Development affects human health and this effect may be positive or negative as development may result in appearance of certain diseases may create others which are not present before (pollution causes many diseases) and may control the spread of some other diseases. In oasis there are a few diseases due to development activities which are called development diseases such as diseases due to insecticides, chemical fertilization, food processors, house building, style, use of technical utilities, increased psychological pressure, artificial feeding for bodies. Folk medicines and beliefs closely connected with the geological environment, so that it is noted that life, beliefs, customs, health and diseases are all centered on water. It is clear that the environmental conditions are considered the most important and direct factors affecting health and diseases and treatment in all the oases.

(3)

Nutrition and food problems are important in the field of development. Natives in the all oases refuse the idea of introducing new crops as they are unfamiliar to them. In spite of the fact that, they are fully aware of their food value many kind of food, eating habits and cooking procedures are considered basic impediments the way to health development.

Dependence on purchased food become great in the cities of the oasis and traditional food is not available even to those with sufficient income, so diet is accelerated by the food industry. This in turn depends on its profit. Processing and pack aging and not on raw foods. This is clear in the widely spreading food industry especially in the cities of Kharga and Dakhla oasis.

Examples of these foods are (pastrami – luncheon- meat- liver and fish). Other kinds of food that are not fresh come from far away regions. They might spoil due to the heat or bad refrigeration. These kinds of food are available but the native do not prefer them but prefer the traditional food. Most of the native dwellers refused to use the new kind of salt sold in the market, they preferred their traditional kind despite of its lack of iodine which is needed for protection against. The natives also do not prefer fish which has been recently added to their food menu in order to compensate for the lack of iodine in their diet.

All this resulted in the appearance of new diseases related to the new kinds of food, such as Hepatitis, Gastroenteritis, vitamin deficiency, fatigue and constipation obesity resulted from the present nutrition. Traditional food are the outcome of adjustment when any change occurs it must be kept in mind that traditional food may be more beneficial consequently, any change in the diet an environment may lead to nutrition diseases. Processed food and frozen meat had its effect on the appearance of many diseases thus were not know before as hepatitis, diarrhea, chickenpox, yellow fever, scartiet fever, dysentery and jaundice.

The changes in the life style that occurred in the oasis as social relationship, economic activities, currency use and economic independency resulted in appearance of many diseases like hypertension, gastric ulcer, hypotension and coronary diseases.

Ecological conditions in the oasis played an important role in limiting the spread of infections brought by new comers from their original habitats such as chest infections, typhoid, meningitis and parasite infections as pillargiasis.

One of the sides of medical health includes the cultural adaptation to health problems, cultural habits and traditions have an indirect effect on health. The cultural adaptation appeared in the efforts that had been made to control illnesses problems.

The list of traditional food has not disappeared but contained to be side by side with the new kind. Therefore, health orientation is very important for better health and less diseases especially in areas where health is threatened and diseases is common.

The formal medical system that concerned with things such as accurate diagnostic, techniques therapeutic efficiency immunization, skilled, surgery and chronic illness relief more broadly interested in the scientist base of medical practices and what teaching about proper diet.

The emergence of human societies created a new adaptive in the face diseases, a strategy that forced on man a major concern with the prevention and treatment in learning to treat diseases. Man has developed a vast complex of knowledge, beliefs, techniques, roles, norms, values and symbols that interlock to form mutually reinforcing supporting system. This vast complex and all the other items to add to the list constitutes a medical system, the term properly embraces the totality of health knowledge, beliefs, skills and practices of the members of every oases and promote optimum functioning of the society.

Some changes especially the economic ones that the oasis have helped to bring some minor changes in food especially to some kinds of cooking vegetables

which have recently been introduced some young of the people now accept fish which has been brought to the area to make for iodine deficiency. Recently, a few people have also started to use the new salt but this has taken some years to do.

Many oasis habitats were directed to modern therapy in hospitals in combination with the folk medicine as medicinal plants and under ground water.

Conclusion

On the light of what has been pointed out the following conclusion can be made:

1- The formal medical systems concerned with things such as, accurate diagnostic techniques therapeutic efficiency immunization, skilled surgery and chronic illness relief, more broadly interested in the scientific base of medical practices.

2- The traditional medical systems still side by side with the new one.

3- Physical and climatic environment conditions have had a vital role in effecting health and diseases are associated with the desert environment. Another kind of diseases associated with the nature of economic activities. The change of seasons is associated with others diseases.

4- The economic, social and development changes that have taken place in the oasis played a role in causing some diseases which were previously unknown to the area.

5- Ecological conditions have played a vital role in making some other diseases quite scarce they are also helped in prevention against some endemic diseases such as Bilharsia.

6- Folk medicines and beliefs are closely connected with the geological environment so that it is noted that life, beliefs, customs, health and diseases centered around water.

7- Nutrition is also related to ecological condition and climate is one of the most important ecological factors that influence nutrition, food requirements, environmental diseases and the food produced.