

## *Chapter 2: Cultural Approaches to Health*

### **Chapter Outline**

Varieties of World Medicine

Western Biomedicine

Greek Roots

Technological Innovations

Chinese Traditional Medicine

Sources of Illness

Treatment

Ayurveda

Sources of Illness

Treatment

Curanderismo and Spiritualism

Sources of Illness

Treatment

American Indian Medicine

Sources of Illness

Treatment

African American Beliefs

Are Complementary and Alternative Approaches Valid?

FOCUS on Applications – Acupuncture

### **Lecture Outline**

#### **I. Varieties of World Medicine**

- A. Each culture has a unique understanding of human being's creation and purpose of life
- B. Early concepts of our bodies and health were related to magic
- C. Our understanding of the human body began to be studied as early as 5,000 years ago with the Chinese, Indian, Greek, and Egyptian cultures

#### **II. Western Biomedicine**

- A. Allopathic medicine, or treatments to cause the opposite effect of the disease
- B. The type of medicine taught, practiced, and prescribed to by Americans
- C. Approaches outside of Western biomedicine are called "Complementary" or "Alternative medicine"
- D. Marked by reliance on technology and science for diagnosis and treatment
- E. Reductionism or the search for a single cause of illness

#### **III. The Greek Roots of Western Biomedicine**

- A. 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC

- B. Hippocrates' Humoral Theory: an excess of a humor/fluid cause personality/temperament
  - 1. Black bile-melancholic—sad
  - 2. Blood-sanguine—cheerful
  - 3. Yellow bile-choleric—angry
  - 4. Phlegm-phlegmatic—calm, listless
- C. Galen- medicine in the Roman Empire

#### **IV. Other Contributors to Western Biomedicine**

- A. Leonardo Da Vinci and Andreas Vesalius: human anatomy
- B. William Harvey: Discussed the circulation of the blood and functioning of the heart

#### **V. Technological Innovations and Western Biomedicine**

- A. Antonious van Leeuwenhoek: Microscopy and the study of blood, saliva, and cells
- B. Louis Pasteur: The study of viruses and bacteria (germ theory)
- C. Wilhelm Roentgen: Discovers X-Rays
- D. MRI: Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- E. CAT: Computerized Axial Tomography
- F. Pharmacology
- G. Surgery

#### **VI. Chinese Traditional Medicine (CTM)**

- A. Treats more people than any other form of medicine
- B. Holistic approach: The body is treated as a whole due to the connections within the body
- C. Macroscopic vs. microscopic
- D. Critical elements of health are food choices, relationships, and emotional life

#### **VII. CTM Sources of Illness**

- A. Tao (origins of life and universe) is created by the opposing forces of Yin and Yang
- B. Yin organs or solid (heart, liver, pancreas, kidney, lungs) more vital
- C. Yang organs or hollow (gall bladder, intestines, bladder) most health problems
- D. A healthy person has a balanced amount of Yin and Yang
- E. Symptoms are related to excess of Yin or Yang

### **VIII. CTM Sources of Illnesses Continued**

- A. The 5 Phases or Elemental Activities: refers to the active forces that illustrate the relationships between human beings and nature
- B. Qi or energy moves within the body in the same pattern as in nature
- C. The 5 Elements are related to a season, an organ, and food
- D. Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal

### **IX. CTM Treatments of Illness**

- A. Symptoms and the patient's life characteristics are used to diagnose the "pattern of disharmony"
- B. Treatment is focused on settling the imbalance through massage, acupuncture, or acupressure and herbs to enhance to enhance the flow of Qi
- C. Qi or energy flows through the 12 meridians or channels associated with organs

### **X. Does CTM Work ?**

- A. CTM has been supported by research
- B. Peptic ulcers
- C. Heart disease
- D. CTM (chronic illness) exists side by side with Western medicine (acute illness) in Chinese hospitals
- E. Acupuncture is covered by insurance in the U.S. due to its effectiveness

### **XI. Ayurveda: Traditional Indian Medicine**

- A. Like CTM, Ayurveda has been in existence for 5,000 years, and is practiced by billions
- B. Ayurveda is the root for many common medical practices such as garlic, yoga, and supplements
- C. Ancient Ayurvedic texts explain causes, symptoms, physiology, prognosis, therapy, pharmacy as well as ethics
- D. Health is a symbiotic and balanced relationship between nature (universe) and the supernatural world

### **XII. Ayurveda Sources of Illness**

- A. 5 elements can nourish, heal, or poison. The elements can be combined to form:
  - 1. Vata dosha (earth and air) nerves, circulation, respiration, elimination
  - 2. Pitta dosha (fire and water) metabolism of organs and cells
  - 3. Kapha dosha (water and earth) growth and protection

### **XIII. Ayurveda Treatments**

- A. Diagnosis is made through inspection of the patient
- B. Yoga, purification (Panchakarma), surgery, drugs, diet, herbs, minerals, massage, color/gem therapy, homeopathy, acupressure, music, aromatherapy and meditation to restore balance

### **XIV. Curranderismo and Spiritualism**

- A. A Mexican American folk art practiced at home in conjunction with Western medicine
- B. Curranderismo relies on the patient's faith and belief system combined with herbs, fruits, eggs, and oils
- C. Curranderismo is based on Judeo-Christian beliefs and the belief that God can heal directly or through a person with a gift from God

### **XV. Curranderismo Sources of Illness**

- A. Two primary causes
- B. Natural: Germs and other factors
- C. Supernatural: Evil spirit, witch, sorcerer, devil
- D. Lack of balance/harmony between the natural and supernatural can cause illness OR
- E. If the person's energy field is weakened or disrupted by any cause

### **XVI. Curranderismo Treatments**

- A. 3 Levels of Treatment
- B. Material: Household items and religious symbols
- C. Spiritual: Trance, out of body travel, medium
- D. Mental: The power of the currandero
- E. Biopsychosocial focus WITH spirituality and the community
- F. Specialized curranderos
- G. Parteras or midwives
- H. Sobaderos or muscles and sprains
- I. Yerberso or herbalists

### **XVII. American Indian Medicine**

- A. In existence for 10,000 years
- B. Similar to CTM and Curranderismo
- C. Health is a sense of physical, emotional, and communal harmony
- D. Four common practices
- E. Herbal remedies
- F. Ritual purification or purging

- G. Use of symbolic rituals and ceremonies
- H. Use of healers (medicine men/women or shaman)

**XVIII. American Indian Sources of Illness**

- A. Link between humans and the natural world
- B. Human fate is linked to the trees, mountains, sky, and oceans (Navajo idea of Walking in Beauty)
- C. Animals, plants/trees, bugs, rocks and wind all sacred
- D. Sickness is the result of imbalance

**XIX. American Indian Treatments**

- A. Coexistence of Western and Traditional Medicine
- B. Shamans coordinate the ability to communicate with spirits and connect the patient's life with their illness
- C. Focus on rituals such as
- D. Sweat lodge
- E. Medicine wheel
- F. Sacred hoop
- G. Sing

**XX. African American Beliefs**

- A. Health beliefs reflect cultural roots in African healing, medicine of the Civil War (South), European medical and anatomical folklore, West Indies Voodoo, and Christianity
- B. Like American Indians, a strong connection with nature and herbs (Inyangas)
- C. If bewitchment or personal/family crisis is suspected, the Sangoma (spiritual diviner or traditional healer) is called

**XXI. Are Complimentary and Alternative Approaches Valid?**

- A. Prior to the advent of research, trial and error probably spurred the growth of CAM
- B. People believe CAM's work irrespective of research
- C. Orthomolecular therapies are common including supplementation chiropractors and osteopaths and practitioners of Reiki
- D. NCCAM has been established to research Complimentary therapies
- E. Regardless, health practitioners need to be aware of the patient's beliefs

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your main beliefs about the causes and cures of illness?
2. Where do your beliefs come from? What evidence do you need to support your beliefs?
3. What do the different approaches to health have in common?
4. Using an empirical scientific approach, evaluate each different approach to health.
5. What are the psychological processes by which a health belief can influence recovery?
6. Compare and contrast the different philosophical approaches to health.
7. Identify the two most significant events in medical history. Rationalize your choices.
8. What are the main causes of illness in Chinese Traditional Medicine? In American Indians? In Curanderismo?
9. Compare and contrast the different treatments used in the different approaches. What evidence would you need to see before you tried a new treatment?
10. What sociopolitical pressures prevent allowing each American citizen to be reimbursed for whichever treatment they desire?
11. How should the field of health psychology best use information about diverse approaches to health?
12. Identify the critical biopsychosocial factors underlying each diverse approach to health.

## Web Links

<http://www.wholistichealingresearch.com/References/Shaman.asp>

An interesting compilation of work on shamanism

[http://soundprint.org/radio/display\\_show/ID/288/name/Curanderismo:+Folk+Healing+in+the+Southwest](http://soundprint.org/radio/display_show/ID/288/name/Curanderismo:+Folk+Healing+in+the+Southwest)

A radio broadcast overview of Curanderismo

<http://www.crech.org/>

Nice link for research on race and ethnicity

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/us\\_rel.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/us_rel.htm)

Information on different religious and spiritual groups in America

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>

Breaks down health and illness by different cultural groups

<http://research.pvfnet.com/index2.html>

Information on research on ethnic identity

<http://www.xculture.org/>

The cross cultural health care program

## **Video Suggestions**

“Chinese Medicine” – [www.films.com](http://www.films.com)

Film explores the ancient healing techniques (acupuncture, Qi Gong, herbal remedies) and discussion of how chi works.

“East/West Medicine” – [www.insight-media.com](http://www.insight-media.com)

Boston healthcare provider blends Western and Eastern medical practices.

“Being Hmong Means Being Free” –

Wisconsin Public TV video sections of shamanism, highlighting the history, culture, and identity of Hmong immigrants.

“Guns, Germs, & Steel” – <http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermsteel/>

A fascinating hypothesis backed by good empirical data for why some cultures developed to be stronger than others.

“Cultural Awareness in Healthcare: An Action Plan” – [www.insight-media.com](http://www.insight-media.com)

This program emphasizes the importance of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate patient care.

“The Health Culture: Traditional Chinese Medicine in the 21st Century” – [www.insight-media.com](http://www.insight-media.com)

This program describes the history and practice of traditional Chinese medicine.

“Aging: Growing Old in a Youth-Centered Culture” – [www.films.com](http://www.films.com)

Two-part series about maintaining quality of life over the long haul.

