Attitudes of traditional healers towards Western medicine in rural Cameroon

Lucie Heinzerling

A range of AIDS prevention programmes suggested that cooperation between traditional healers and the biomedical primary health-care system would benefit patients. To assess the knowledge and attitudes of traditional healers in Cameroon towards Western medicine and evaluate their willingness to cooperate with the district health-care system, a qualitative study was undertaken. In this study, 16 randomly chosen traditional healers in Kumba, Cameroon, were interviewed. Western medicine was well accepted for certain indications and referral of patients to health-care centres was frequently practised. All healers stated that they wished to cooperate more extensively with the district primary health-care system and to obtain more biomedical knowledge. Closer cooperation between traditional healers and the district primary health-care system is possible. The frequent occurrence of illiteracy must be considered when designing health education for traditional healers.

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