

Title:

Responding to the Mayan Understanding of Health and Illness

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Session Title:

Rising Stars of Research and Scholarship Invited Student Posters

Keywords:

Beliefs, Global and Maya

References:

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Abstract Summary:

The Maya population in Guatemala experience disproportionate negative health outcomes. In-depth interviews were conducted with Mayan families to ascertain their understanding of health and illness. Findings will inform health professionals on the provision of culturally sensitive care.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to describe three health beliefs and practices of the Maya people.	Review and discussion of a poster presentation

The learner will be able to explain three illness beliefs and practices of the Maya people.	Review and discussion of a poster presentation
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Abstract Text:

The Maya population in Guatemala experience disproportionate negative health outcomes. Intestinal infections through contaminated drinking water cause millions of infant and child deaths in rural Guatemala. In 2014, a community-university partnership distributed water filters to Maya households in a remote village. A one-year post-intervention household survey revealed use (70%) and non-use (30%) of the water filters. One recommendation from the parent study (Larson et al., 2016) suggested exploring the Maya perspective of health and illness. An extensive literature review revealed no previous studies on the Mayan understanding of health and illness related to potable water.

In 2016, families new to the community received water filters. This is the target population for this follow-up study in the summer of 2017. This study was conducted using Kleinman's explanatory theory, which posits viewing health care as a concept that is interrelated with society, we will examine the Maya understanding of health and illness.

A qualitative descriptive study design was used to conduct in-depth interviews with the Maya head of households. A trusted community leader, known to the research team, provided guidance and local knowledge. Interviews were conducted in Spanish in a location convenient to the family. Interviews were conducted and audio-recorded between May and June 2017 in Guatemala at a convenient location for the families, and were transcribed immediately upon return to the United States.

The aim of this study is to have results that lay a framework for promoting community health by finding themes in Maya family health and illness beliefs and practices.

This study builds on three previous years of research in the area of health and illness in the same remote Maya village. This research is significant because Guatemalans are the 6th leading Hispanic sub-group in the United States and understanding their health and illness beliefs will serve as a foundation for delivery of culturally sensitive health care.