

Unveiling Cebuano Traditional Healing Practices

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Abstract - This study aims to identify the features of Cebuano's traditional healing practices. Specifically, it also answers the following objectives: analyze traditional healing in Cebuano's perspectives, explain the traditional healing process practiced in terms of the traditional healers' belief, and extrapolate perceptions of medical practitioners toward traditional healing. This study made use of qualitative approach, among five traditional healers who performed healing for not less than ten years, in the mountain barangays of Cebu City. These healers served as the primary informants who were selected because of their popularity in healing. The use of open-ended interview in local dialect and naturalistic observation provided a free listing of their verbatim accounts were noted and as primary narratives. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were interviewed privately after obtaining their consent. The Cebuano traditional healing practices or "panambal" comprise the use of "himolso" (pulse-checking), "palakaw" (petition), "pasubay" (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing), "pangalap" (searching) of medicinal plants for "palina" (fumigation), "tayhop" (gentle-blowing), "tutho" (saliva-blowing), "tuob" (boiling), "orasyon" (mystical prayers), "hilot" (massage), and "barang" (sorcery). Though traditional with medical science disapproval, it contributes to a mystical identity of Cebuano healers, as a manifestation of folk Catholicism belief, in order to do a good legacy to the community that needs help. For further study, researchers may conduct further the studies on the: curative effects of medicinal plants in Cebu, psychological effect pulse-checking healed persons by the mananambal, and unmasking the other features of traditional healing.

Keywords: mananambal, traditional healing, animism, Folk Catholicism

INTRODUCTION

The existence of traditional healing dates back from 14,000 centuries B.C., until Chinese, Graeco-Arabic and western countries start using traditional medicines. It is the oldest form of structured healing, which is practiced with basic set of tenets [1]. Before modern medicines have been introduced by this kind of practice in the Philippines, our early ancestors have engaged in traditional healing. According to Del Fierro and Nolasco, a traditional healer in Cebuano society is called *mananambal*. A *mananambal* is a local medicinal doctor who resorts to indigenous means of treating patients who are in pain or have been long suffering from various forms of illness caused by supernatural factors [2]. The appellation *mananambal* is a derivative of the term for the art of *panambal* or traditional folk healing in the Philippines. Those families of known *mananambal*, with reputation to heal a lot of diseases are known as group of *tambalan* [3]. But as time passes by, that kind of belief or practice is already slowly

diminishing. Brought by modernity, new inventions in medicine, many people rely more on professional medical practitioners who use science or modern medicine to cure diseases. Hitherto, despite the extensiveness, power, and capacity of modern medical science, large portion of our human population can never avail its benefits, because of their impoverished economic situation. At the turn of the century, traditional medicine is practiced among the poor communities in rural villages. The healthcare needs of the Philippines is associated to power and capacity, because only the rich can avail to modern hospital facilities, while the poor is part of an estimated 50%, who rely on the use of folk healing [4]. Our interest and curiosity about how traditional healers help patients to be cured, in any common disease drives the conduct to do this research. This study aims to find out different features of a Cebuano's traditional healing practices, and wants to discover different healing treatments or procedures done by the *mananambal*. The *mananambal* may utilize wide

variety of treatments for their patients including decoctions, poultices, fumigation, anointing, cupping, prayers, incantation, and diverse magical procedures [5]. Moreover, this study provides information on how the *mananambal* get his or her ability to cure those common diseases. Being a *mananambal*, he or she is highly respected because of his or her craft in folk-healing, which is learned through observation, imitation and experience. A *mananambal* is a person, who has been inherited the gift of healing from his or her family, as a hereditary influence. [6]. Traditional healing might have been forgotten because of highly modernized society, still it molds of how we are today. It has been part of our rich culture and it plays a significant role which makes the Filipino culture extraordinary.

Traditional healing is a part of Philippine society and culture. It is said that traditional healing practice is combined to Christian belief when Magellan has converted the Cebuanos (the people of Cebu) to Catholicism. In Cebuano society, a faith healer is called *mananambal*. It is believed that a *mananambal* is not only capable of healing biological defects; but he or she can also cure ailments which are instigated by paranormal control, beyond the capacity of an ordinary individual. A folk healer, according to Leiban is said to have an unusual connection with the spiritual world, which is derived from his or her mystical patron, in order to uphold the power to heal [5]. Several *mananambal* acquire their knowledge in healing or sorcery from their ancestors or through spirit intercession. They also learn *orasyon* or words of power from a book called *librito* which is authored and given by a spirit as a *tuga*, a gift, as they strongly believe; but contents of this little book are written in Latin texts, which are the basis of the healer's *yamyam* (hushed mantras) imply that a *librito*, as a book of prayer, has been written brought to the Philippines, with an unknown origin. A conjecture is made that a *librito* might have been a keepsake amulet by any European migrant in the Philippines before or during the Spanish colonization, which is left nowhere with someone; but found as foretold by *mananambal*'s dream to be traced in a discreet place like: beside a river bank, inside the cave, under the rocks, in the graveyard, and in an old shack. All *mananambal* who are gifted with this power are known as *gitugahan*.

During the primitive time, the *mananambal* holds an infinite and more vital role in society than a medical doctor do in the present community. All *mananambal* are much concerned with the general

welfare of everybody like: promising an abundant farm harvest and settling disputes in the family. Another function of the *mananambal* is protecting the people in the community from any harm brought by evil spirits and promoting quality in community life. As time progressed, an *albularyo*, a derivative of the *herbolario*, who heals sickness through the use of local herbs in the countryside, becomes a known figure in the marginalized areas in the Philippines. Without background in scientific medication, the marginalized Filipinos trust the powers of the *mananambal* to alleviate physical and psychological pains because of their supernatural powers. Lieban suggests that sorcery practices and folk healing may have the occurred in some in poor countries due to the muddling magnitudes of global transformation. This basically uses the healing powers of herbs in the backyard and in the woods, which modern ethnobotanists are interested in finding a connection to provide a healthy balance of life in nature. According to Gaabucayan in his study entitled, 'The Medicine Men of Agusan in Mindanao', there are many kinds of *mananambal* such as the: *herbolario* or herbalist, *manghihiilot* or the masseur, the *mananabang* or the unlicensed midwife, *mananawal* or *orasyonan* or the one who possesses power to heal by means of oil and prayer, and the *mambabarang* or the sorcerer [7]. The terms for each kind of *mananambal* depend upon which is practiced and normally hired, to provide a panacea of the client's diagnosed illness. Very frequently, he or she combines numerous of these roles collectively, in order to quicken the healing process.

Every *mananambal* has different methods or procedures in treating the illness of patients. Stafford as mentioned in the study of Del Fierro and Nolasco define illness as "a term that denotes the patients' perception of a health problem and such perception govern the patient's behavior including the selection of a remedial measure" [2]. Folk healers observe several healing rituals. Most of them search concoction ingredients such as: herbs, candles, potion, oil and amulets every year. The practice is called *pangalap* or *pagpupuros*. The ritual of ancestor worship, like to offer their souls with food and drinks is called *halad*. This is substantiated with the rice-pouch ritual or *puso* in Barangay Taptap that farmers do as part of their traditions [3]. They also perform a ritual fumigation accompanied by prayers called *palina*. The chopping or slicing of *pangalap* ingredients is referred to as *pangadlip*. A burning

process is required to transform the ingredients into ashes is *pagpagong*. *Batak* is a ritual used to elevate one's spirit to become invulnerable from spiritual attack and it also empowers amulets and implements use in healing commonly performs by folk healers. In some cases, a healer provides offering to the spirits to heal the patient afflicted with illness caused by any supernatural phenomenon. The offering is known as *kiyaw-kiyaw*. *Tawas*, a diagnostic ritual utilizing melted alum or candle wax, dropped in a basin with water, then images are formed and interpreted according to the nature of illness is also utilized. Other than rituals, most *mananambal* use special materials in the healing procedure. *Tuos* is an object, which consists of grains, coins, and eggs to be wrapped in a red cloth or sometimes black cloth and place in the altar or above the head of the patient to determine, if the spirit accepted the offering. They also use *lana*, a medicinal oil concocted from coconut and sometimes *orasyon* are written on paper to be added to strengthen the healing effect of oil.

Since folk healing is greatly influenced by Christian faith, most of the *mananambal* utter prayers to the images of significant figures of the Christian religion like: Virgin Mary, the statues of the Señor Santo Nino, the Holy family, and the Crucified Christ, before performing a certain healing procedure to the patient. Lola Conching, a famous *mananambal* in Siquijor has reported to heal patients using prayers and the process of bolo-bolo or water bubbles. Bolo-bolo in the old Visayan language means "bubbles" [9]. A person who practices bolo-bolo is called *mambobolo*. The process includes placing a black magic stone inside a drinking glass and then poured with visibly clean water until it is half-full. The *mambobolo* then inserts a *bagakay* or a stick, taken from a dwarf bamboo variety, into the glass, where he or she sips some water, gurgles, and finally spats it out. Then, the *mambobolo* blows air into the water so it becomes bubbly. Surprisingly, the water becomes extremely dark and murky. Mang Francisco, one of the patients of Lola Conching and who has been suffering from chronic itching all over his body declares that he no longer feels itchy after the bolo-bolo session [9]. Mang Francisco is the only one of those who shares the same testimony on the effectiveness of folk healing.

However, some people perceive traditional healing as a sin against the Catholic Church. This is because one of the varieties of traditional healing is sorcery. Sorcery can be viewed in different ways. It is

considered as an art, a practice, or a person's spell, which is supposedly to be exercised with supernatural powers through the aid of evil spirits like: black magic and witchery. In Cebuano term, sorcery is called as *barang*. In the study of Gaabucayan, anyone who has the capacity to wreak witchcraft to an enemy is supposed to cause disease by forcing live insects or inanimate objects like hairpins, broken glass, fine sands or mud into the corpus of the intended victim". Ironically, most of the *mambabarang* or sorcerer consults to saints. In the study of Gaabucayan, a *mambabarang* says that before doing anything evil, he or she consults Saint Anthony [7]. Just like any other traditional healing practices, *barang* is accompanied with prayers often referred to as *paghalad* or offering. The weirdest and most dreaded character of traditional *mananambal* is doing a dual role of being a sorcerer and a healer, at the same time.

Traditional healing is generally viewed as a distinctly different system of giving treatment from modern medical treatments. But a study of two American psychologists, conclude that there is a complementation of both systems of Western and traditional healing [10]. In fact, Mavis and Sophy recommend that there is "a sharing of knowledge and collaboration between modern health-care practitioners and traditional healers" [11]. Their studies have found out that "traditional health practitioners have good knowledge about cervical cancer care". Thus, collaboration may help in the early detection of cervical cancer, thereby providing the best treatment, in order to reduce the usual rate of the mortality.

But, what Muller and Steyn mention, "there is still limited cooperation that exists between the two systems" [12]. This means that prior to any cooperation of the existing two practices; an attempt of common understanding necessitates recognition. In many countries in the world, health among men, women, and children becomes a basic right. Limitation to financial resources affects choices and actions of people toward healing. As mentioned by Bongcac, Dr. Vergie Bonocan Maquiabas emphasizes the age old practices continue; despite modern day science because those who seek it finds it cheaper and sometimes more effective than relying on medical experts [13]. In the state of impoverished situation, people may resort to inexpensive ways even if the ailment requires care of licensed physicians. Beliefs and practices about healing, including the ideas on culture, may affect people's decision in response to

treatment, when they consult the *mananambal*. This context mirrors the shades of poverty, where people cannot afford to avail the health services in medical centers, because they only give a little amount to the *mananambal* for his or her rendered service, which is called *pahalipay* or an offering.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to identify the features of Cebuano’s traditional healing practices. Specifically, it also answers the following objectives: analyze traditional healing in Cebuano’s perspectives, explain the traditional healing process practiced in terms of the traditional healers’ belief, and extrapolate perceptions of medical practitioners toward traditional healing.

METHODS

Research Design

This study made use of an ethnographic design, among five traditional healers who performed healing for not less than ten years, in the mountain barangay of Cebu City. These healers served as the primary key informant *mananambal* (KIMs) who were selected because of their popularity in healing. In order to provide a balance of results, 13 special informants *paseyente* (SIPs), as traditional healing patients were also consulted.

Research Tool

A Phenomenal Coinage of "Panambal"

Table 1 Healing Procedures Identified by the Five Mananambal

Key Informant Mananambal	Procedure	Description
KIM ₁	Tayhop Tutho Himolso Orasyon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gentle blowing of the head of the patient coupled with prayers ➤ Mild spitting of saliva to the patient (commonly on the head) coupled with prayers ➤ Checking on the pulse of the patient ➤ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient
KIM ₂	Orasyon Rubbing of Lana Himolso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient ➤ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut ➤ Checking on the pulse of the patient
KIM ₃	Orasyon Rubbing of Lana Himolso Panubay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient ➤ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut ➤ Checking on the pulse of the patient ➤ Determining the causes of illnesses through the guidance of supernatural entities
KIM ₄	Orasyon Rubbing of Lana Himolso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient ➤ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut ➤ Checking on the pulse of the patient
KIM ₅	Orasyon Rubbing of Lana Himolso PagtambalsaNas udlan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient ➤ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut ➤ Checking on the pulse of the patient ➤ Driving away supernatural beings from possessed individuals

The use of open-ended interview in local dialect and naturalistic observation served as research tools in which key informants are observed and interviewed in its natural setting without any manipulation by the observer provided a free listing of their verbatim accounts were noted and as primary narratives. Participant Observation was voluntarily conducted privately after obtaining their consent.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in the selected remote mountain villages of Cebu namely: Barangay Ga-as, Barangay Taptap, and Barangay Sudlon. These barangays were selected because of the presence of lush vegetation where the natural medicines can be sourced out, villagers the *mananambal* for healing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the different sets of healing procedure, which the five key informant *manambal* are engaged in treating the different forms of illnesses. Traditional folk healing in Cebu does not limit to cure biological illnesses, ailments and diseases as what most of people think. As revealed in the study, *panambal* also means treating impaired social relationships, which KIM₃ specializes this kind of healing. Accordingly, he only needs photographs and complete names subject to the healing procedure, to fix relationships, using special *orasyon* (prayers), which he has inherited from his mother-in-law.

Magical Treatment for Building or Destroying a Relationship

The power of healing can never be underestimated in the following vignettes. One of the photos KIM₃ shows is an image of a middle-aged woman who is widely smiling. At the back of it is a letter written by his client which says,

"*Kaning bayhana dili na magsamok ni Jed Palao. Ug malimot na siya ni Jed, dili na siya ganahan ni Jed. Gretchen Cabuyao dili na magsamok ni Jed Palao mobowag na siya ni Jed Palao.*" (This woman will not bother with Jed Palao anymore. And she will forget Jed and will dislike Jed. Gretchen Cabuyao will not bother Jed and end her affair with him) –KIM₃.

KIM₃ narrates that his client is Jed's fiancé. Since her fiancé is cheating on her, she's trying to get rid of the other party in their relationship. Stories like that are not new to KIM₃ and in fact, he can also be a matchmaker.

"*Magdayon jud si Rosegen Pacaldo og Jed Palao. Dili jud magbowag si Jed og Rosegen hangtod sa pagbalik namo gikan sa abroad.*" (Rosegen Pacaldo and Jed Palao will be bonded together. That they will not be separated until we come back from abroad).

His client wrote at the back of two pictures which are attached to each other by an electrical tape. The aforementioned practices are called *palakaw* (petition), which can be either positive (preserve life) or negative (destroy life). The use of mysterious or supernatural forces to influence the course of events is perceived to be a magic. Magic can be associated to sorcery and witchcraft which is popularly known as

barang in Cebuano language. The five *mananambal* use *orasyon* but; only KIM₃ seems to use these prayers to cast spells or curses. One photo illustrates a man and at the back portion of it is a writing that says,

"*Mouli na unta siya. Makunsensiya siya sa iya gibuhad. Maglabad ang iyang ulo ug dili na unta siya makatulog.* (I hope he will go home already. He will have the conscience to all the things that he has done. He will have a headache and will not fall asleep).

The letter is written by the man's wife as shown in the picture. As observed, the last sentence of the letter is a statement that inflicts harm to someone. In anthropological terms, cursing others so that they are struck by misfortune or even death is a variety of sorcery [14]. However, KIM₃ strongly denies that he practices sorcery.

"*Mutambal ko, pero, barang? Di ko oy!*" (I heal, but, sorcery? I don't!)

He firmly says, but, admits that he counterparts other sorcerer's curse to his clients. He clearly identifies himself as a *mananambal* and his clients consult him *para magpatambal* (for healing). The habitual use of the phrase *magpatambal ko* (I need healing). When consulting a *mananambal* (healer), both the healer and the believer perceive that *panambal* (healing) encompasses strengthening social or intimate relationships or impairing and cursing a person to illness. *Himolso* (pulse-checking) is the initial process of the *pananmbal* in order to diagnose the sickness and perform *palakaw* (petition) or *pasubay* (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing).

The Healing Power of Nature

Table 2 Medicinal Plants for Fatigue

Photos	Local Names	Scientific Name	Curative Parts	Uses for Ailment
	Tigaw	<i>Callicarpa formosana</i> <i>Rolfe</i>	Leaves, Roots	Fatigue

	Dalapot/ Gabon	<i>Blumeabalsamifera</i>	Leaves	Fatigue
	Lagnob	<i>Ficushauili</i>	Roots	Fatigue
	Kipi-kiipi	<i>Biophytumsensitivum</i>	Roots	Fatigue
	Sibukaw	<i>Caesalpiniasappan</i>	Tree Bark	Fatigue

The five *mananambal* or healers use herbal plants which are seen in Tables 2 and 3, which are perceived to be safe and effective remedies to treat common illnesses or diseases in the upland areas. Consequently, the healers utilize these plants in making ointments, oils and medicines which they prescribe to their patients. Although Cebuano traditional healing is often conceived as influenced by

religion, mysticism, magic and superstition, the uses of medicinal plants suggest that *panambal* (healing) is an alternative modality for treating mild diseases and illnesses. In fact, former President Fidel V. Ramos signed into law Republic Act 8423, also known as “Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997”, in order to find an immediate panacea to physical and psychological pain using the way of nature [15].

Table 3 Medicinal Plants for other Ailments

Photos	Local Names	Scientific Name	Curative Parts	Uses for Ailment
	Mangagaw	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>	All	Dengue Fever



Dapdap	<i>Erythrina variegata</i>	Trunk	Hemorrhoids
Tuba-Tuba	<i>Jatropha curcas</i>	Leaves	Arthritis, mild stroke, hypertension
Noog-noog	<i>Solanum verbascifolium</i>	Leaves	Hyperacidity
Wachichao	<i>Orthosiphon aristatus</i>	Leaves	Kidney problems
Sabana/ Labana	<i>Annona muricata</i>	Leaves	Cyst, cancer

M₁ identifies *mangagaw* (*Euphorbia hirta*) as a therapeutic plant for fever, but according to the research done by students of UP Los Baños, the claim still depends on what type or variety of *mangagaw* a healer is using because this has a certain side effect. *Mananambal* and medical personnel have different perceptions toward medicinal plants. *Mananambal* strongly believe that the herbs they prescribe are reliable, since nobody in the community has complained about their possible negative effects. People in the medical field, on the other hand, promote conduction of scientific studies to validate the effectiveness and safety of the use of medicinal plants. Thus, folkloric health care using herbs could develop scientific studies and promote medical

product development, as a breakthrough for modern medicines. The use of herbs becomes essential in “pangalap” (searching) of medicinal plants for “palina” (fumigation), “tuob” (boiling), “hilot” (massage), and “barang” (sorcery).

Every Healing Procedure is accompanied by Prayers

The *mananambal* make use of prayers, specifically identified as *orasyon* in treating whatever ailments or diseases. Often, *orasyon* is written in Latin, which is known to be the language of God. Two of the *mananambal* reveal that they use “*librito*”, a book composed of several *orasyon*. KIM₅ said that his *librito* is written in 520 languages with 73 prayers and 21 of those are Latin *orasyon*. Although not all of

them have *librito*, it does not lead to the absence of *orasyon*, in every healing procedure that they perform. KIM₁ who acquires his ability to utter *orasyon* from his unusual trainings in his dream testifies that prayers should be done to make his healing craft effective. “*Mao to nga silbi giorasyonan siya para maayo siya kay nabughat man to siya,*” (That is why a prayer alleviates his or her suffering of fatigue) he answered when asked of the reason of uttering prayers to one of his patients upon performing the healing process called “*tayhop*” (gentle blowing).

The remaining four *mananambal* are also asked on the necessity of the said *orasyon*. Their responses suggest that an *orasyon* is neither a healing guide nor a source of healing abilities. There is no empirical way of testing the effectiveness of prayers in healing a person as of now; yet, KIM₂, KIM₄, and KIM₅ claim that they have healed patients who are suffering from cancer by means of an *orasyon*. Despite all the uncertainties, it is undeniable that traditional healing in Cebu is strongly driven and influenced by the Christian faith similarly to other traditional healing practices in the Philippines. This is folk Catholicism—a belief that animism and faith in the Supreme God co-exist.

Atypical Way of Attaining Healing Abilities

Most of the *mananambal* claim that their healing abilities originated from their ancestors and are passed on through the next generation; while some confess that they obtain their healing abilities through apparition. Two of them say that their calling begin through a series of dreams/apparition. KIM₁ laments “*Aw! Oh, kanang kuan, unsay ngan ana, pagbuot siguro sa kinaiyahan kay gitugutan naman kog panambal. Wa man ko ingon nga nituon ko ug panambal.*” (Aw! Yes, maybe it’s the will of God that He grants me the ability to heal. It is not that I practiced my ability to heal). When asked how his calling begins, he answers, “*Naay panahon nga nag damgo ko, nakamao na kog niana, naa may tiguwang nga naghatag nako og mga polong nya iyang isulti ba unsaon paggamit. Magbalik-balik sa akong damgo, kapin sa buwan kada-gabii.*”, (There are times that I am dreaming of an elderly, giving me words on how it will be done then with that, I knew I can. It was continuous and repetitive dreams, more than a month, every night). Like KIM₁, KIM₅ also testify that their calling begin through an apparition “*Permi ko ato gipadamgo ug usa katawo na pwerti gyud dakoa, unya iya kong gituok ug nay nagpakita na usa ka tiguwang*

na babaye ug gitultulan ko niya sa agianan paingon sa langob diin nakaplagan nako didto ang usa ka librito.” (It starts with a series of repetitive dreams. In my dreams I saw a big man, who chocked me then an elderly woman came. She guided me the way to the cave where I found the libretto). If some *mananambal* attain their healing abilities through apparition, there are some of them who attain healing abilities to heal from their ancestors and pass on through the next generation. Most of them who attain their healing abilities through their ancestry and by training are part of the Rizalista—a society that mushrooms in the 20th century, in honor of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, as the country’s National Hero. The execution of Rizal in 1896 paves the way to a popular imagination as a Filipino Jesus Christ. In the study done by Reynaldo Iletto as cited by Lahiri explains that the association of Rizal to Christ paves way why a symbolic Rizal has brilliant characteristic to represent the powers of Filipino *manambal*, who transforms a physical form to something spiritual and receives a healing power [16]. Rizal is also associated to “Amang Doktor”, a fatherly doctor, in “a spirit who appears to certain people as a wizened old man hunched over a walking stick”. Although in appearance, he is nothing like the handsome young man with the wave of hair over his forehead but according to many, “Amang Doktor” and Jose Rizal are just one. The spirit of the young patriot, whose martyrdom at thirty three, has apparently grown old. Every interviewed *mananambal* has their own story in acquiring their healing abilities. Despite their differences, they all have the same goal—to heal the sick, since they believe that healing their patients is their legacy to the community.

Traditional Healing as an Alternative

Twelve out of thirteen patients interviewed believe in traditional healing. They see traditional healing as an alternative to medical practice because of financial matters. SIP₄ says,

“*People at the province believe traditional healing because some have no money.*”

Vis-à-vis, SIP₁₀ confirms SIP₄’s statement the impoverished have no other choices and says,

“*If I’m sick then I go to traditional healer... to have a “hilot” (massage), then I feel comfortable, because I believe he or she can heal my pain without paying big cash.*”

Evidently, patients consult traditional healers instead of a professional doctor for medical help because they are not required to pay a fix amount unless they donate. This is an opposition to the hospitals or clinics where a consultation fee is required for every transaction made. This is supported by the study of Dr. Vergie Bonocan Maquiabas, that the age old practices continue despite modern day science because those who seek it finds it cheaper and sometimes more effective than relying on medical experts [13].

Medical Practitioners Disprove Traditional Healing

The *mananambal*, as traditional healers are already a reliable persons who have the indigenous health information and ways of indigenous treatments. Provided with appropriate competencies, traditional healers play a bigger role in preventing diseases to anyone, in the society. However, most medical practitioners do not believe in traditional healing for the reason that most of the medicines the traditional healers use have not been validated scientifically. One medical practitioner even states, “Many people suffer because of the serious complications that arise due to the use of traditional medicines.” Medical practitioners do not recommend traditional healing as an alternative way to cure diseases. It needs further studies to prove its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Cebuano traditional healing practices or “panambal” comprise the use of “himolso” (pulse-checking), “palakaw” (petition), “pasubay” (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing), “pangalap” (searching) of medicinal plants for “palina” (fumigation), “tayhop” (gentle-blowing), “tutho” (saliva-blowing), “tuob” (boiling), “orasyon” (mystical prayers), “hilot” (massage), and “barang” (sorcery). Although traditional healing with medical science disapproval, it contributes to a mystical identity of Cebuano healers, as a manifestation of folk Catholicism belief, in order to do a good legacy to the community that needs help. For further study, researchers may conduct further the studies on the: curative effects of medicinal plants in Cebu, psychological effect pulse-checking healed persons by the *mananambal*, and unmasking the other features of traditional healing.

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