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The social representations of traditional medicine in Algeria

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Abstract:

The demand for traditional treatment and its practice is a profession and is usually popular in Algeria, but it did not take its true size due to lack of recognition by many, but in reality the various segments of society still resort to it in treating their health problems and hundreds or thousands of traditional healers are active without a license or legal accreditation. Their popular support and social recognition that it enjoys, especially since the profession has been inherited by many, which makes the whole matter left to mess and chaos. But the factor of need and trust remains behind the Algerians' appetite for traditional medicine. On the other hand, we see that in Algerian society, traditional medicine is practiced according to different cultures. Therefore, in its practice, patterns of local culture appear for each region. In addition, the resort to traditional treatment is determined in light of a set of considerations from the social religious beliefs inherited from the ancestors. This means that the social development of the nature of the disease determines the behavior of individuals in the manner of treatment. In this regard, we try to clarify our vision for this work in order to develop a theoretical sociological conception about traditional medicine in Algeria and its social representations in reality, which are considered the embodiment of belief behavior and the firm folklore through which we can prove its importance and social status.

Keywords: Traditional medicine, Folk medicine, Social beliefs, Social representations, Health education.

Introduction:

The medical field in Algeria is witnessing a remarkable development with regard to medicines and modern devices that have undoubtedly contributed to improving the quality of medical services. But despite the discoveries of modern medicine, concerns have increased considerably with the many and varied practices of traditional medicine and the return to nature to cure many diseases. Algerian society is saturated with a remedial heritage that covers most areas of health and disease, preventing and treating the various kinds of traditional practices that require expertise and skill, which may be derived from social inheritance or acquired through the knowledge and self-collection of the different cultures that we know. But at the same time it has opponents who consider it a kind of quackery and a way to gain illegally. and between validation and lying, the patient in our society seeks to bet his time and money in order to find effective therapeutic solutions by people who have adhered to traditional medicine. Given the importance of the practice of traditional medicine, which is derived from prevailing culture and affects a large segment of society, we can give a dispersed comprehensive and illustrative view of the reality of the phenomenon and highlight some of its determinants of associated social variables through a theoretically sociological approach.

1. Problematic

Traditional medicine in Algerian society is such a distinctive social phenomenon that it attracts so many interested groups that are passionate about it and another category that is questionable about it. This type of medication is becoming more widespread and widespread in society in different social segments, where those who are willing and confident in its effectiveness are not limited to uneducated or uneducated social groups, but even educated with a high cultural level. This reference may be due to the success, relevance and therapeutic usefulness of traditional medicine or may be related to the aspect of the cultural heritage embedded in popular memory that charted the continuity of various forms of traditional medicine despite the discoveries and scientific victories achieved by modern medicine in the treatment of diseases, but the historical and cultural character of each region in our society has played some part in the activation of entrenchment and prevalence in the practice of traditional medicine. It became multifaceted and manifold beliefs and practices, which resulted in a religious and ideological perception, the other absentee perceptions, and often the doctor was isolated. Among our vision is social reality in the face of deteriorating economic life, high standard of living and high costs of health services. The majority of individuals have returned to traditional medicine and various folk therapeutic methods instead of modern medicine in order to harm the cost of treatment. The patient does not pay the required financial costs in the missteps and crises of health services in the country and declines their credibility to members of the community. and the state of neglect and chaos that has become characteristic of public appeals institutions. In this regard, we must not lose sight of the fact that it cannot be asserted that the traditional therapist's opinion in case of illness is limited to the simple and poor in choosing the cheapest therapeutic methods

offered by traditional medicine, the decline of health services or other motivations. Rather, the phenomenon of traditional medicine has a strong presence in individuals' sacred and mundane lives, their trust and belief in the possibility of traditional medicine to bring hope for healing. Thus, social representations of health and the choice of popular treatment may be consistent with the nature of people's and social groups' beliefs about the practice of traditional medicine produced by the relationship between man and his environment. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that there is a lack of convergence between the sexes in resorting to different patterns of popular medication. In our view, this inequality confirms the social fact that the category of females of different ages is more accessible to all possible means of traditional medicine with opportunities for rest and healing. This may be due to the nature of women's mindset, which provides them with a desire to respond to and look forward to the most important popular beliefs and knowledge of strong presence in popular memory to alleviate their suffering and pain and overcome obstacles encountered during their lives. At the same time, women are endeavouring to receive these remedial solutions for all members of the family, especially females, who are more assimilated, more vulnerable and more believable. Moreover, we see that women with rural origins may be more used for grassroots therapeutic practices than for urban ones. In this sense, the practice of traditional medicine is a first-ranking cultural concept that varies from region to region and the choice of treated patterns is within the framework of trust and adherence to traditional health beliefs and practices stemming from society's culture.

It should be noted here that there can be no denial of the ideological stampede that we may consider to be the inherent force within each individual to move and direct his behaviour towards dependence on folk medicine. His vital strength and continued patience are based on his firm belief in his acceptance or rejection of traditional medicine's ability to treat human diseases. This point leads us to say that the degree of adherence and cultural perception of individuals reveals the reality of the polarity of traditional medicine in our society. Those who have social support based on tendency and intellectual character later become behavioral formulation. Those who take unresponsive or dissent come from previous ideas to live with a bad experience that occurred in the past or are not originally convinced that it is a world that is obscure and confidential and lacks the basic knowledge of diseases. The inability to properly prescribe medicines... etc. Thus, traditional medicine has the greatest dissent between those who dispute its ability and health and those who are convinced of its effectiveness and optimization. Hence, we have included the general question as follows:

What are the real reasons why traditional medicine proves its existence, effectiveness and return after the social and cultural transformations that society has experienced balanced with the presence of progress in modern medicine? Or what are the factors driving individuals' recourse at different social and cultural levels to different types of traditional medicine? As a result of this general question, there are several partial questions: * Does the belief aspect have an impact on the social representations of traditional medicine?

* Is health education related to social representations of traditional medicine?

2 Hypotheses

* The belief aspect may have an impact on the social representations of traditional medicine.

* Health education has to do with social representations and traditional medicine.

3 Definition of concepts for study

1.3 Medicine:

It is the science that brings together human experiences in caring for the human person and the diseases and injuries he knows that affect his body, psychology or the surroundings in which he lives. It tries to find medication and surgical treatment and perform it on the patient. It also addresses conditions that encourage diseases and ways of avoiding and preventing them.¹

2.3 Traditional Medicine:

It is the ancestral treatment inherited in all its scientific and superstitious characteristics. It represents a set of popular beliefs and therapeutic practices that have long been used to treat patients by people who believe they have the ability to treat people and have roots in all continuous therapeutic systems and patterns since the beginning of culture.²

Some view it as an element of folklore that finds a culture of the environment fit for growth and prosperity that brings together traditional ideas and perceptions about the disease, treatment and related behaviour and practices related to the prevention and treatment of the disease regardless of the formal framework of modern medicine.³

3.3 Social representations:

It is a set of intellectual perceptions posed by individuals to interpret certain phenomena and take the attitudes they acquire from their cultural and cognitive histories where they reflect a particular view and focus on aspects of the phenomenon that have a general impact on realization. It is also a set of knowledge, attitudes, attitudes and beliefs on a particular topic, so it contains a set of knowledge and attitudes for particular situations and applications of normative values and provisions and is therefore a method of vision in the world that is translated into governance as well as in action.⁴

4.3. Social belief:

It is a set of thoughts and principles that society believes in their health that are demonstrated by perception and communication with others as a basis for the practice of rituals, customs, traditions and folklore and makes it a starting point to justify their actions and actions and explain the logic of their adherence to them by considering their actions.⁵

4. Folk medicine besides modern medicine at present

By spreading the wave of popular medicine and blockbuster rhetoric about the need to return to nature, some people interested in folk medicine have begun to promote the need to adopt folk medicine as an alternative after the damage and risks that have occurred in modern medicine that have claimed many lives as well as the risks of taking certain inappropriate medicines The doctor is wrong if he

fails to refer to all scientific means and medical tests or obtain all necessary information to help him diagnose the disease, such as determining the type of disease and choosing treatment. In view of these and other reasons, social perceptions about the subject of traditional medicine are many among supporters and opponents. Indeed, there is a complementary role played by traditional medicine because some diseases cannot be treated by modern medicine, especially those related to clothing and magic. In contrast, there are diseases of modern medicine that are better at treating than in folk medicine.⁶

This situation that traditional medicine knows in society has made social triangulation varying and different about its role and importance s role in the field of medicine ", including those who consider that traditional medicine is essential and in another category that its role is secondary with the presence of modern medicine and that another group also goes to the lack of its role entirely, especially with the technological development in the field of medicine at present, Naturally, the source of these perceptions is the local environment and its beliefs and traditions.

In other words, differences in the content of these perceptions are influenced by elements of social attitude, the most important of which are heritage and social upbringing, customs and values, social interaction, social relations... We consider the socialization of an individual in the family as the main determinant of the latter's treatment method in case of illness. If the family in which he lives believes in absenteeism or the effectiveness of popular treatment, there is no doubt that the patient's therapeutic path for treatment will be traditional medicine. In another context, traditional society entrusts the issue of the management of the disease crisis to the component of women first and then traditional therapists second, as trustees and trustees of knowledge about the disease. Women continue to be responsible for treatment from home folk therapy to other methods.

Home treatment with natural substances such as olive oil, honey, etc., is the first treatment station in the patient and when it fails, it is directed to the loyal stations. This makes us say that the responsibility for treatment in daily life is primarily feminine.

Mothers in the home, whether educated or uneducated, prefer to provide home prescriptions for medication if the condition is simple, such as having a fever or a cold if they have knowledge of the traditional prescription of this condition. Otherwise, consulting is a superficial and this is common in our society.⁷

Despite the evolution that has affected many aspects of life in our society, headed by the social and cultural aspects, we note Algerians' adherence to popular heritage in dealing with health problems while at the same time looking to live better in progress and evolution. This means the existence of a traditional and modern orientation that is closely linked to the ocean and the adoption of a local cultural model that is linked to a scientific pattern of thinking. In addition, there is an interrelationship between traditional medicine and modern medicine. Most herbs and plants are currently involved in the synthesis of modern medicines. Modern medicine recognizes its effectiveness to the extent that the orientation of

certain intractable cases may reach traditional handcrafts who trust their therapeutic abilities and skills. This actually reinforces this correlation between two types of medicine but relatively.

5 The most important drivers of popular therapy

Some factors are determined by the reality of the present image and the extension of the impact of the past. These factors are the current state of official health services, their effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility and material cost. In addition to the nature and impact of the social and cultural context in the areas of disease and health, where the spread is known, the depth of the roots, the necessary confidence and efficiency, the diversity of practice and beneficiaries, while the modern therapeutic pattern is predominant in alienation and inadequacy, and disregards the social and cultural context of the disease, as well as the difficulty of accessing formal health services, their value and insufficient availability. So we could say that popular therapy was found to remain in the social arena that was created from a strong competitor. The people's treatment in Algerian society remains anchored in the following factors:

- * The alienation of members of the formal therapeutic form from the disease in society perpetuates trust in and reliance on popular therapy. This alienation may be eliminated if members of the formal therapeutic modality abandon the literal application of the biological and clinical model in the provision of therapeutic services and recognize the biosocial model and the cultural and social backgrounds of patients.⁸

- * The obstacles of affirming and applying a healthy democracy in modern medicine, i.e. the relationship between the doctor and the patient, the right to information, the right to the law and the right to the necessary attention).⁹ In our view, this aspect destabilizes professional behaviour and the suspicion of diagnosis, treatment and preventive measures will serve to take traditional medicine the most appropriate solution.

- * The inadequacy of formal therapeutic services resulted in patients going to popular treatment with increased confidence in it such as herbal and ironing therapy, experiment, obstetrics, cupping, cauldron, treatment of the Holy Quran.... etc.... The many costs and amounts of treatment have also contributed to the use of affordable and accessible folk therapy.¹⁰

The proliferation of therapeutic procedures in official medicine in the diagnosis of radiation, analysis, examinations and longer time consuming, and the existence of some side effects of modern medicines have led to uninterrupted demand for and reliance on popular treatment.

- * Folk therapy sometimes outperforms modern medicine in therapeutic competition and achieves satisfactory results to increase dependence and confidence in it and in providing therapeutic alternatives to diseases that modern drugs are unable to treat, as well as that traditional medicine strives to innovate in simple treatment methods and develops its expertise in conducting experiments and extracting new herbal medicines. This may be evidence of the flexibility of popular therapy and its enduring endeavour to stabilize its existence and continuity.¹¹

* Many folk therapeutic practices derive their strength from trying to basically associate them with religion and this association appears to be evident in the treatment of the Holy Quran and the Prophet's Year. We note here that whenever the therapist is aware of the origins of religious therapy, he helps to know the appropriate means used in treatment and commitment to the creation of Islam is part of the fundamentals of the success of traditional medicine and the provision of health to society and in appreciating everyone keen to adhere to the teachings of his religion for considerations that make him perceive the phenomenon of popular medication, in particular those therapeutic practices related to healthy and sound religious beliefs.¹²

6 Traditional medicine practitioners in Algeria

By observing the realities of Algerian society and wanting to discover what is relevant, we have found that many traditional medicine practitioners or so-called herbalists differ in many respects. Here we try to classify them as follows:

1.6 University-level herbivores:

They are people who practise traditional medicine and have a university composition of several disciplines in Islamic science, sociology or economics, etc... But we should point out here that this popular medication idea was quoted as inheritance as well as reading books and following tips and guidance from parents and grandparents. At this juncture, therapists play an essential role in maintaining and sustaining people's therapeutic practices. This role is increased whenever the therapeutic services they provide and benefit, there are those who receive pay and others who do not, although they are not expressly remunerated, receive remuneration otherwise to strengthen their social status.¹³

2.6 Herbivores with composition:

People who have benefited from a formation in traditional medicine and how to treat with medicinal herbs consider that traditional medicine inherited from ancestors and not based on scientific knowledge is insufficient and useless for correct treatment. Because there are methods and eating herbs that cause complications if they are misused and this category has a share in their own account of formation in Arab and Islamic centres and institutes, which is called alternative medicine where we use modern devices such as pressure and sugar measurement.

3.6 Experienced herbivores:

They are people who have gone to such practices as a result of their friction in this field or who had experience with the disease and failed treatment. This prompted them to look for an alternative by looking for a new profession and everything related thereto based on past work and experiences that occurred with others as well as their entry into this area by accident and for a more commercial than therapeutic purpose.

4.6 Substandard herbal:

Among them are those who focus on selling herbs for healing, where they are considered a livelihood, and those who are treated in shops and markets by tracking books or by inheritance, and those who use superstition and sorcery. (magical aspects), and here whenever the culture of individuals is of a magnitude

and place in the collective unconsciousness of absentee and superstitious thinking and the elements of popular imagination, the beliefs of the disease are many of the perceptions and interpretations that are predominantly religious and mythical in nature, including the invitation to visit the shrines of righteous parents in search of the mitigation of diseases that may infect or suffer their popular circles and their demands.¹⁴

7. Items coming to traditional medicine in Algeria

Through our reading of reality and our briefing on some field studies in this area, we have observed that there is a difference in this category in terms of sex, where the popularity is more women than men. This difference is due to the characteristics of each sex, for example, men believe in the scientific side than in the superstition of any attraction to the rational side.

Women also care more about health and beauty than men and are highly influenced by propaganda and medical advice. If we look at the age, we find all the varieties except children. They do not come alone. Young people depend on the scale of the scientific aspect, especially males. They also rely on the formal aspect such as arranging the place. treatment and hygiene methods, they choose the composition in the field and have a scientific and knowledge asset about traditional medicine. For the elderly and the elderly, they accept the whereabouts of traditional medicine without taking into account these important standards of treatment and alleviation of the suffering of the disease. For example, the markets and pavements in which this item appears are open to medication. This is due to the preservation of customs and traditions. Any ancestral cultural heritage preserves the whereabouts of traditional medical practices.¹⁵

We should also add another category of Algerian society accepting traditional medicine determined by the economic and social level. We find all social classes that are affordable, medium and poor, but the first category and the second category are more acceptable to therapeutic shops than markets and sidewalks. The poor are the other way around. To stimulate and increase the degree of turnout and at the scientific and cultural level, all levels are below the primary, intermediate and university levels. The class of university prefers to visit the therapeutic places where the therapists are more studying in this area, taking into account the requirements of hygiene, good treatment and reception.¹⁶

Traditional medicine can also be classified according to their interests and purposes because the individual acquires his basic trends through social normalization, so either modern medicine is the chosen one or one of the traditional therapeutic methods is the sanctuary or pessimistic and abusive view of health care by traditional medicine. Such facilities disrupt the patient's psychological condition, leading them to seek redemption from any means. If they lack the right knowledge, their only way is to resort to traditional treatment, although there is some medical knowledge of the causes of the disease or saturation of negative ideas, they turn to modern medicine, This is the case of dissonance between views and views, with the understanding that the popular interpretations guaranteed by culture largely correspond to individuals' preconceptions of the causes of the disease, which means that this is the result of

preconceived ideas and intellectual perceptions already present that are rejected by opinions convinced of modern medical treatment methods. The fact that this situation of contradiction of values and concepts reflects being influenced by cultural background, civilization and class and social situations is a manifestation of the problems of the development of traditional medicine.

8 Algeria's traditional medicine crisis

The therapeutic practices of traditional medicine in Algeria are a diverse and pluralistic pattern of perceptions, beliefs and practices among members of society. This has led to their entrenchment in collective imagination and includes a wide range of expressions of beliefs and values that are increasingly popular. However, it faces many challenges and some problems and obstacles that prevent its development. Indeed, it constitutes the features of the traditional medicine crisis and can be analysed as follows:

1.8 Lack of compatibility and complementarity between studies of modern medicine:

We know all too well that remote areas are less or less poor or rather inadequate health services, which is the only way to rely entirely on traditional medicine towards the search for healing and wellness. In addition to its limited and inefficient efficiency in the absence of recommendations from competent academic and governmental bodies to provide various assistance to strengthen the knowledge balance and composition of people's medicine practitioners to raise the confidence of their patients. In fact, there is no scientific strategy to work on organizing and raising the performance of people's medicine, to take advantage of successful methods of health services, to improve the efficiency of practitioners through educational and rehabilitation programmes, to provide information, to encourage research work on various forms, to assess treatment methods, to correct their shortcomings and to create some coordination and cooperation and to exchange information between people's medical practitioners and medical resources working in official health services.

Thus, the lack of modernization and enhancement of access to the best way to drive the integration of traditional medicine into health systems at the national level and encourage scientific research.

2.8. Value conflicts in the individual's culture and society:

It is a state of cultural and socio-economic heterogeneity experienced by members of society. The patient and his or her group are the reference for therapeutic options whose values are formed primarily by the family and the imposition of its views and ideas. The educational and social system devotes confidence in these views and proposals and thus there are few people who know the secrets of herbal therapy. and therefore the most appropriate, reliable and reputable in this area must be taken into account.

It is worth noting here that the methods used in traditional medicine include some shortcomings in the excess promotion of certain ways and herbs that they are able to treat everything and in quick times without mentioning information on the content and quality of these drugs to ensure their effectiveness. If used in incorrect ways or with modern drugs, they make them toxic and dangerous,

especially when the doctor does not tell them to use them out of the belief that everything that is normal is useful and this misconception may lead to significant complications in the future. Traditional medicine is not based on solid scientific foundations and does not rise to the level of science except for some Western countries that study it in academies, which Algeria lacks.

9. Social beliefs and representations of traditional medicine

In our society there are many and various social beliefs but their function is through their influence on behaviors and ideas, which deserves to be seen and reflected in their role in giving meaning to social life and promoting the values of local communities and cultures. Indeed, it is up to the environmental and geographical environment and various historical and cultural factors and their obvious impact on people's perception and representation of life in general that explain the differences and ways of belief in individuals. At the same time, however, it is strained by the limitations and mindsets of its bearers, which constitute features of the practice of traditional medicine.

The traditional healthy appearance is undoubtedly a mirror that reflects the belief in society and the very close relationship between them and the pattern prevailing in an environment that plays a role in making visions and social representations about a health situation or choosing certain therapeutic methods supported by trust and individual conviction. This can be seen as one of the core backgrounds of its indigenous cultures, where culture contributes to the manufacture and creation of health and disease representations in individuals and ways of treating diseases and consolidating their convictions. Health and disease are linked to lifestyles, reproduction and preservation or loss.¹⁷

Conclusion:

Through this study we have shown a lot of issues related to traditional medicine practices where we believe through individuals' perceptions of traditional treatment based on absentee, religious and popular beliefs and perceptions. Often scientific interpretations are isolated because there is a close association with the prevailing local culture and popular beliefs. Despite the advancement of the health service by the State policy in the field of hospitalization, it seems obvious that the traditional medicine representations have been produced in the context of various religious and theoretical treatment. The practice of traditional medicine is a social, cultural and religious process, along with the superstitious influence that has been perpetuated across generations.

With increased health awareness, social and economic changes in Algerian society and significant improvements in health services, this has not helped to reverse and confine traditional medicine practices and use, given the importance of popular beliefs that are embedded in the depths of society and exist in different social classes. To varying degrees, it has left a climate conducive to the spread of many different therapeutic methods to address the health problems carried out by the individuals themselves with the assistance of those treated with human necessity.

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