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GUNIS-Traditional healers of Rajasthan, India

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Health seeking behavior is an important factor in health management. Ignoring it while considering schemes for providing health facilities can result into non- acceptance by the community. It is important to understand the perception of the community regarding the service delivery. This becomes critical especially among traditional and tribal societies. With this motive, Accreditation and Certification of prior learning (ACPL) in folk healers was designed. It was an effort to find out genuine folk healers who have been practicing a traditional system of medicine since ages and applying the indigenous method supported by herbal drugs. A minimum competence document was prepared and folk healers were tested for their knowledge by an expert committee. Three institutions initiated this certification process and were piloted in eight states of India. This paper focuses on the review of this certification process. This review is done in Udaipur district of State Rajasthan. It was performed in order to validate the practices of traditional healers, often called gunis. The purpose of the review was to find out the effectiveness of their treatment and to what extent it can be accepted, integrated and mainstreamed. Traditional health practitioners (THPs) and their role in traditional medicine health care system are worldwide acknowledged. More than three fourths of population relies on alternative medicine for health access in developing countries. This area is ignored by the government, less discussed by the health economists, and orphaned by science. Unfortunately, almost all the evidence about their effectiveness is anecdotal or testimonial in nature, and remains unpublished by accepted medical journals. Medicine is becoming more and more dehumanized by advent of machines and working at the human element lost in it is the need of the hour. This paper is an effort to acknowledge the traditional health practices. It is an effort to bring these practices out of their territory to get recognition among the masses.

Biography

Harsh Lata Bookel is working as a Research Associate at O P Jindal Global University, India. She is trained as an Ayurvedic Doctor (B.A.M.S- Bachelor's in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery) and holds a Master's degree in Public Policy. Before joining Jindal, she worked in Seva Mandir- an NGO working for the disadvantaged communities in Udaipur district of Rajasthan, India. She was looking after the maternal and child health program. She interned at Foundation for revitalization in local health traditions. She was involved in the process review of a pilot project called "Accreditation and certification of prior learning in folk healers", Udaipur, Rajasthan.

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