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Healing logics : culture and medicine in modern health belief systems

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Abstrak

this collection grew out of Utah State University?s 1996 Fife Conference on folk medicine, in which contributors Bonnie B. O?Connor, David Hufford, Bonnie Glass-Coffin, Barre Toelken, and I participated as faculty. During an intense week of conferences and informal discussion, we realized that the direct involvement of humanities scholars in various aspects of institutional biomedicine?such as medical education, clinical pastoral care, and negotiation of transcultural issues?now informs work in folklore and medicine as never before. Old models of investigation that artificially isolate ?folk medicine,? ?complementary and alternative medicine,? and ?biomedicine? as mutually exclusive conduits of information were proving too limited in our exploration of the real-life complexities of health belief systems as they observably exist and are applied by contemporary Americans. Our own work as well as recent research in medical publications strongly suggests that individuals construct their health belief systems from diverse sources of authority, including community and ethnic tradition, education, spiritual beliefs, personal experience, influence of popular media, and perception of the goals and means of formal medicine.What is less evident is how these health belief systems of authority interact?sometimes competing, sometimes conflicting, sometimes remarkably congruent.We agreed that it was time for a publication exploring this new integrative (dare I say ?holistic??) dimension in our observation and research.