

Annotated Bibliography of Unpublished Literature On Alaska Native Traditional Healing

This collection is housed at the Institute of Circumpolar Health Studies, University of Alaska Anchorage. It is primarily unpublished literature (“gray” and “black”) on the subject of “Alaska Native Traditional Healing” which is defined as Alaska Native beliefs and practices on illness, disease prevention, and health promotion.

Carroll, G. (2002). From Out of the Past...30 Years Ago Traditional Medical Cures Along the Yukon. *Alaska Medicine*, 44 (3), 66-69.

This journal article discusses two basic types of medicine practiced by the Athabascan Indians along the Yukon river: herbalism and shamanism. The author compares the traditional healing practices between three ethnographical regions: the Chandalar Kutchin, the middle Yukon area, and the Ten’a of the lower Yukon. The use of spruce trees is commonly used by all three regions for cuts and scratches. When traditional medications failed, all three regions relied upon a shaman, or medicine man, to guard people against the effects of evil spirits, to assist men in their quest for food, and to restore to health those who have been harmed by evil spirits.

DeLapp, T., and Ward, E. (1981). *Traditional Inupiat Health Practices*. North Slope Borough: Health and Social Services Agency.

This report summarizes a series of interviews with Inupiat Eskimos living in the North Slope area of Alaska who had been recipients of traditional health care practices, those who could recall traditional practices from childhood or stories about traditional practices, and current practitioners of traditional health care techniques. The purpose of this report is to determine the extent and status of the use of traditional health practices and practitioners; catalog and analyze specific practices with regard to their safety and effectiveness in the viewpoint of Western medicine; attempt to identify how widespread the use of specific practices were; outline methods of integrating common practices into existing Western health care services; gather information on Inupiat concepts of health and illness; and document traditional health practices for Inupiat cultural history. An interview guide is included in the appendix along with specific recommendations on training Indian Health Service personnel, Public Health Nurses, and Health Aides.

Dildine, D. (1999, March 6). ICHS studies Native healers. *Northern Lights*. n.p.

This article summarizes a study the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies (ICHS), University of Alaska Anchorage, conducted on behalf of

Southcentral Foundation to research the attitudes and perceptions of the Native population on traditional Native healing. ICHS traveled to Alaska's rural villages and interviewed healers and elders. Conclusions were: the ability to heal is considered a gift; everyone has the potential to use this gift however there are different gifts that can change on an individual level.

Eby, D. (1994, October). *Traditional Healing, Technological Biomedicine, Compacting-How do they fit together?* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Public Health Association, Washington, D.C.

This paper warns about the dangers of incorporating traditional healing methods and its practitioners into allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is defined as a model of the body as a machine composed of many parts which break down and need to be fixed. The body is independent from the mind. Medical interaction between doctor and patient is focused on a diagnosis. Identify the disease agent and eradicate it. While allopathic medicine is based on individualism, reductionism, personal ownership and commodification, traditional healing is integrative and interdependent. Life is seen as a matter of maintaining proper relationships, balance. Mind, body and spirit are connected. Healing is done in a community or family context or in sacred locations. The afflicted person is an active participant in the healing process. The presenter fears for the integrity of traditional healing methods and practitioners if these two methods are combined.

Floyd, M. (2001). *Use of herbal remedies by Alaska Natives and American Indians in Anchorage*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alaska, Anchorage, United States of America.

This master's thesis is a qualitative study describing the use of herbal remedies in health and illness by American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the Anchorage area. The following categories and subcategories of herbal use were identified: spirituality (spiritual belief, spiritual uses); remedies for ailments (women's problems, respiratory problems, skin problems/wounds, stomach/digestive problems, blood disorders, aches and pains, renal cleansing); remedies to maintain health (good feelings, remedies used for health and pleasure). Results conclude that American Indians and Alaska Natives in the urban areas of Anchorage still use traditional plant remedies. Recommendations include: science and health care practitioners are advised to learn about traditional healing plants; schools can include cultural education about herbs and Native languages in their programs; practitioners can be open to and encourage the incorporation of traditional healing practices into health care.

Hadden, E. (2001). *UAA Research and Grant-based Projects/Programs Related to Alaska Native Peoples, 1996-2001*. Anchorage, AK: University of Alaska Anchorage.

This report summarizes UAA Goose Lake campus research or program/project grants from 1996-2001 that directly or indirectly relate to issues or needs of Alaska Native peoples. Of specific interest to traditional medicine are the following projects: Ann Garibaldi's Alaska Native Traditional Medicinal Plant Use (\$40,000); Dr. Donna Burgess, Melodie Fair, and Cathy Dishman's Copper River Native Association Cultural Treatment Camp; Dr. Brain Saylor, Dr. Donna Burgess, and Carl Hild's Alaska Native Traditional Healing Project (\$26,223).

Hild, C.M. (1989). Inuit (Eskimo) Ways. Turner, A.A. (Ed.), *The Iditarod Arctic Sports Medicine/ Human Performance Guide* (pp. 67-85). Anchorage, Alaska: American College of Sports Medicine, Alaska Regional Chapter.

This chapter provides ten Inuit lessons learned from experiences surviving in the Arctic. Specific examples that reflect Inuit traditional healing knowledge and practices are: Inuit foods that contained special chemicals that aid in cold environment survival; ways of controlling bleeding; child birthing practices that toughen babies for cold environments; specially designed clothes like snorkel hoods and parkas with no zippers or front openings; stories or myths that provided important survival lessons like keeping still and not moving to keep clothes dry from sweating, sleeping, and building shelters with a vent to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.

Hild, C.M. (1982). *Native to Alaska's North Slope*. North Slope Borough: Health and Social Services Agency Newsletter.

This newsletter article provides an overview of Inupiat culture and traditions. A broad range of topics are covered ranging from the plants and animals that the Inupiaq depend upon for clothes and food; customs and celebrations related to harvesting food or welcoming visitors; healing techniques like using seal oil for stomach and bowel problems, sore throats, and stiff joints. The article conveys the need to learn from the Inupiaq culture which is closely tied to the environment.

Kwaraceius, J. (1993). *Central Yup'ik and Siberian Yupik Plant Lore*. Unpublished study, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Sixteen Siberian Yupik or Central Yup'ik Elders answered questions or reviewed photos from Jan Schofield's book *Discovering Wild Plants* (Alaska Northwest Books, 1989). The information gathered includes vascular plants organized according to the Euro-American classification system used in *Flora of Alaska* (Hultén, 1968) with Native terms, mostly Central Yup'ik. Some biological and cultural information about plants were recorded for the first time in this study, including Siberian Yupik or Central Yup'ik words. The discussion section of the study also provides recommendations on how to work with Elders. Researchers need to have a translator, be knowledgeable of the language and culture, be respectful of the Elder and the community. In addition, the researcher needs to reveal their reasons for seeking knowledge and how they will use the information they gather. Appropriate permissions need to be obtained for recording via photos, videos, writings, or video recordings. In terms of recommendations regarding biological information, the author cautions that Native systems of plant and animal classification differ from Euro-American systems; the researcher must consider the time of the year the plant is gathered, how much is harvested over an area, what are the preferred harvest areas, what parts of the plant are used, how a food plant is prepared for storage, and how it is prepared for eating; and to be aware that spiritual beliefs can affect information gathering.

Lucier, C.V., & VanStone, J.W. (1987) An Iñupiaq Autobiography. *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 11(1), 149-172.

This article is an autobiographical sketch collected orally from Della Keats an Iñupiaq Eskimo healer. It conveys the flow of native life in the Kotzebue region of northwest Alaska during the first forty years of the 20th century. Born in 1907, Keats describes a traditional subsistence lifestyle. At an early age, she became interested in human anatomy and folk medicine. She became a midwife in the 1920s until 1950s. She healed many Alaskan Native and Caucasians through traditional knowledge, personal observations, and reflection.

Mauneluk Cultural Heritage Program. (1976, June). *Timimun Mamirrutit*. Kotzebue, Alaska.

The title of this report translates to "body healers" in Iñupiaq. There are four individuals who provided the information in this report: Minnie Qapvaitchialuk Gray, Arthur Silaiyaq Douglas Sr, Mamie Naagaayiq Beaver, and Lulu Tuttugruk Geary. Minnie discusses the medicinal properties of the stinkweed plant, juniper berries, cranberries, spruce needles, tree warts, swallows, caribou fat, and porcupine. She also describes how the Iñupiaq cured

boils, snowblindness, and toothaches. Arthur shares the knowledge of Upper Kobuk Iñupiaq Eskimo traditions in treating diarrhea, constipation, colds, rheumatism/arthritis, toothache, abscess, swollen liver, red streak around the waist, earache, boil, snowblindness, stye, cataract, hornet sting, and sore mouth. Mamie talks about how her forefathers prepared for winter life in the summer. The women worked hard sewing, hunting small game, fishing, gathering edible plants, picking berries and preparing clothing for the winter. She explains the medicinal uses for willow leaves, porcupine, cranberries, stinkweed plant, blood letting, fatty skins of ducks, spruce tree gum, seal oil, and dried nest remnants of bank swallows. Lulu also spoke about treating coughs, loss of appetite, sore throats, colds, swollen liver, appendix, boil, nosebleed, cuts, snowblindness, and cataract. She also described childbirth as an isolated process for the mother, where although food and shelter were provided for her, she had to deliver the baby on her own.

McPherson, T.M. (2004, Summer). The Healer and the Machine. *First Alaskans, Summer 2004*, 8-11.

This article features a Yupik healer, the first to be certified as a “tribal doctor” by an elders council, named Rita Blumenstein. Since Western medicine doesn’t understand what she does for patients, Blumenstein agreed to get a reading with the Gas Discharge Visualization (GDC) machine, which evaluates energetic patterns of physical bodies. The machine proved that Blumenstein’s energy field is clear and bright, her aura almost perfect unlike the readings that most people get.

Mercurieff, L. (1995). Let goodness take its place. *Denadolale*, 3 (2), 1-10.

This speech was presented at the 17th Annual Shareholder Meeting of Gana-a’ Yoo, Limited. It is sometimes referred to as the “Alaskan prophecy”. It is a message of wisdom from the Hopi and Maori that the human race is moving into the World of the 5th Hoop. It is a message of hope, a time when all four sacred powers (red, white, black, and yellow) are reconnecting. It will also be a time of great healing. The wisdom of how to work with Mother Earth will be restored. For the last 4,000 years, the world has been stuck in the male energy side. Now, things are shifting to the female side. This transition into the World of the 5th Hoop begins in Alaska. The healing advise is: Seek not to fight evil-do not fight it- let goodness take its place. Take care of how you think and how you feel. Be present in the moment. Love that which we may hate or who we may hate. Ask the Creator to help you find the way to healing.

Morgan, R. (2000, April). *The Circle of Healing*. Unpublished report.

This concept called “Circle of Healing” is offered as an approach to treatment and healing that unifies the effects of technological miracles of modern medicine with culturally-based traditional practices, specifically to meet certain program needs at Southcentral Foundation and similar health service providers in the Nation.

North Slope Borough: Health and Social Services Agency. (1983). *“If” Arctic Survival Manual*. The North Slope Borough, Alaska: Hild, C.M.

This “If” manual provides instructions on how to survive in the Arctic. A complimentary “When” manual is a laminated wallet-sized card that accompanies an individual when they are in the emergency Arctic situation. Many of the examples like the snorkel hood provided in the manual are derived from Inuit traditions who have learned how to survive in a cold environment through lessons of experience.

Norton Sound Health Corp (Producer). (n.d.). *Hands, Head, and Heart, Story of Della Keats* [Streaming Video]. Retrieved April 1, 2005, from www.alaskool.org/resources/audiovisual/dellakeats.htm

This video features Della Keats, For over 50 years, Della used her healing hands and positive approach to heal Alaska Natives. Since 1974, she worked for Maniluaq Association. She learned to heal by healing herself. She uses her hands, her head, and her heart as her instruments of healing. Her sense of touch is highly developed. She uses what she knows to teach people, shows them how to care for themselves. She doesn’t work on a patient but with them and gives them the opportunity to take control of their own health.

Russell, R. (1998). *Traditional Healing Tapes from 1984-1987* [Cassette]. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Quotes about traditional healing from interviews with Della Keats, Isa Sovalik, Rita Blumenstein, Poldine Carlo, Howard Luke, Hannah Solomon, Vernon and Irene Evan, Sally Hudson, Margaret Eskilida were collected from the Elders in Residence collection. This collection was produced by the Alaska Native Studies 401 class at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Sherwonit, B. (1995, January). Picture of Perryville: Alutiiq couple appreciates traditional, modern ways of village life. *Senior Voice*, p. 5.

This article features Frieda and Ignatius Kosbruk, Alutiiq Elders, who describe how before the arrival of Western teachers and doctors, the villagers depended on herbs for medicine. The roots of wild geraniums heal sore throats. Wormwood are used even today to ease aching muscles. Bloodletting was also used for poor blood or tuberculosis. The couple also appreciate modern medicine and lifestyles such as electricity, plumbing, television, schools, and health clinics.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Aleut*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Aleut traditions. One spoke about child birth practices and Aleut relocations during World War II, while the other spoke about Aleut history and loss of language.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Alutiiq*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Alutiiq traditions. One spoke about the Alutiiq rituals and traditions of being a woman, especially concerning childbirth. The other speaker talked about Alutiiq steam baths, herbs, and games that taught critical lessons of survival.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Athabascan*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Athabascan traditions. Both speakers presented Athabascan traditions of raising children and grandchildren, especially concerning staying healthy and leading good lives. They also talked about certain herbs that were used for medicinal purposes.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Haida*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Haida traditions. Both spoke about Haida child birthing practices, spiritual beliefs, and the meaning of totem poles.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Inupiaq*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Inupiaq traditions. One was a tribal doctor and the other was his assistant. They both spoke about Inupiaq traditional healing practices, specifically on bloodletting or "poking".

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Tlingit*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features one speaker representing Tlingit traditions. She spoke about drum making and the spirituality of drum making.

Southcentral Foundation (Producer). (n.d.). *Traditional Healer Yupik*. (Available from Southcentral Foundation, 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508)

This video recording is one of seven tapes recorded by the Southcentral Foundation as part of a conference titled "Healthy Generations". It features two speakers representing Yupik traditions. Ben Snowball demonstrated the healing power of song and dance. Lisa Dolchok spoke about her early experiences with her grandma.

Stacheirodt, M. (1986). *Introduction to the Eye of Awareness Model*. n.p.

This report provides a model for recovery and healing. It is a holistic circle that can be incorporated into any healing work, counseling, or mental health therapy. The key concept of the model is to open the awareness of the reader or workshop participant and to identify where he/she might be closed off in spiritual connection. The healing process begins with a desire to change, a spiritual awakening. The next step in the cycle moves on to the physical level where the body may undergo distress or changes. It can also involve breaking denials or becoming aware of a distressing attitude about oneself. The next step involves processing feelings or emotions, identify them and begin to talk about them. The next step involves mental processing where the individual brainstorms solutions, ideas, and choices. The cycle then repeats.

Wennekens, A. (1983, July). Aleut Botany in the Prince William Sound. *Alaska Native News*, p. 21-23.

This article features an account based on information obtained from Ted "Sunshine" Chimivisky, the son of the last chief of the village of Nuchek, and other Cordova and Tatitlek elders. The study was sponsored by the North Pacific Rim under a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum. Several medicinal plants are discussed: devil's club, stump currant, fireweed, flower coastal daisy, highbush cranberry, deer fern, wormwood.

Wennekens, A. (1984, August). Aleut Botany on the Lower Kenai Peninsula. *Alaska Native News*, p. 38-42.

This article summarizes a study sponsored by The North Pacific Rim under a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum. The author interviews Mr. Walter Meganack, Village Chief, and his wife Luba; Mr. Serguis Moonin; Mrs. Eleanor McMullen; Mrs. Lydia Robart and her sister Mrs. Martha Wallin, Mrs. Feona Sawden; Mrs. Juanita Melsheimer and her daughters Kathy Kvasnikoff and Tersa Wilson; Mr. Vincent Kvasnikoff, English Bay's Village Chief. Several medicinal plants are discussed: Little Star of Bethlehem, Sweet Coltsfoot, Deer Fern, Fruticose Lichen, Dog Ears Fungus, Lavender Daisy, Sitka Spruce, Pineapple Weed, Tundra Rose, Yarrow, Alder, white Seaweed, roots of Nettle.