



INDIGENOUS HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS OF SRI LANKA AND AUSTRALIA TO COMBAT EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge or local knowledge is the unique knowledge confined to a particular geographical location, culture or society. It is rooted in a particular place and set of experiences, and generated by people living in those places. This knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation by oral, imitation or demonstration. Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in the world which has a recorded history over thousands of years, rich with traditional knowledge in healthcare and medicine. The Sri Lankan traditional health system was a mixture of indigenous medicine (Desheeya Chikithsa) and Ayurvedic medicine. “The controlled mind controls the body, and leads to a controlled life” was the theme of the traditional system. They have adopted the prevention of diseases than curing. The history of Australia goes back to 40,000 to 70,000 years. Indigenous Australians had a lifestyle enduring spiritual and artistic traditions. They lived in harmony on their own simple, but powerful control systems in every aspect. However, the Western occupation in both countries seriously damaged the growth and the use of indigenous knowledge of them. The indigenous healthcare systems were replaced by the Allopathic medicine or science-based modern medicine. Today the entire world suffers from various epidemics and Covid-19 pandemic. The allopathic system is successful to a great extent in epidemics, but become helpless and clueless at the pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) also has identified the importance of traditional knowledge in defeating pandemic. Hence, the study was focused to find the indigenous knowledge of Sri Lanka and Australia to defeat epidemics and pandemics. The stratified sampling technique was adopted for data collection, the sample contains 60 individual. The strata were; Sri Lankan citizens, Indigenous Australians, Australian citizens or permanent resident holders with Asian origin. Data collection was done by personal interviews and e-surveys using a self administered questionnaire. Results revealed that the parents or grandparents of 92% of the respondents have used home remedies for various ailments. They have used medicinal foods and drinks to increase the immunity and prevent diseases. Medicinal plants were extensively used to stop spreading diseases. Social distancing was strictly kept within and outside home in epidemics or pandemics. The majority of the respondents still use some of those methods, but find it difficult to get the optimum benefit due to lack of availability in herbal plants. 63% of them prefer indigenous treatments than allopathic treatments and believe that the indigenous treatments have no side effects or after effects. However, no one refused allopathic treatments; 71% of the participants go for it for fast relief. According to them a combination of traditional and modern medicine would be the best option for a healthy world. They unanimously blame the authorities for not paying enough attention for protecting indigenous healthcare systems.

Keywords: Indigenous health system, Allopathic medicine