

Research on physicians that are operating out of the hospitals (1)

Treated with distilled water, spread the bones without surgery

The nurse Vjolca Muladahuti, claims that she has treated a patient to whom she has given injection without medicament, only distilled water and the pain really passed away. Dr. Shkelqim Sela, psychiatrist, explains that in the treatment of the patients to some extent help the suggestions and beliefs.

Laura PAPRANIKU

Health system in Macedonia is completely excluded from the legislation and there are more than hundreds of folk physicians which have failed to cure their patients who also were unable to find cure in the hospitals or patients which have been diagnosed serious diseases. They just act as alternative medical services, the so-called folk physicians go around and heal and provide medicaments for various diseases, starting with rheumatic sciatic, broken bones up to malignant diseases.

In many cases, the results of treatments of the folk physicians are visible, tangible and proven by many people. However, the affinity of other fraudulent to abuse, the ones that hide behind epithet folk physician was the reason, why many time the boundary that separates deceivers from the real folk physicians diminishes. As the first also the latter have their patients, which believe in bigotry of their "physicians" or due to the beliefs, suggestions or just because they might have luck and accidentally might be healed by the person who performs service on a certain way. In the town of Debar, for example, the folk physicians with such finesse regulate broken or displaced bones, sprained muscles, twisted navel as hardly any orthopaedist physician or internist can pass this craft.

Distilled water to stop the pain

Physicians reject any part of the medicine that can be absorbed as the profession for someone who has no medical education or has specialized in medicine. According to her and patients, they urge them to feel extends of "healings" as belief and persuasion that they can create it for certain medicament or physician. Nurse Vjolca Muladahuti shows that they have treated such a patient few years ago. "I can remember as it happens now, a patient who suffered from sciatic and he was determined to stop the pain, though he had to take injections every six hours for sedation. And as it is unacceptable to give him so many medicaments with no need, the physician told us to persuade the patient and ordered us to treat him only with water distilled injection (Aqua redistilled). Once the injection was given the patient felt comfortable and relaxed. There the pain now ceased commented patient. Nurse Muladahuti says that "Aqua redistilled" is used as a solvent for

other injections, which are in powder and logically can not stop the pain. However at those patients it had effect. It really stopped the pain”, explains the nurse. Medical science accepts the influence of beliefs in the process of healing or worsening of the diseases. Dr. Shkelqim Sela, psychiatrist, says that other people’ suggestions have effect on patients’ recovery. “You can not specify exactly to what percentage it affects, but it does, as one can be assured in a certain kind of medicament and he can really think that it is medicament that can cure and heal”, says Sela, underlining that in all such cases, patients must be mentally ill. People who have paranoid ideas and hallucinations can be determined that after the consumption of certain medicament they will feel like healed. Sela explains that this category of patients is not necessarily victims of those “physicians” that heal with tobacco, charm, crosses or icons.

Trade or not

”Soul diseases which are related to the psyche, according to him are very difficult to be healed with such a method which above mentioned “physicians” use. They can be effective and can cure some people with neurosis which are eventually determined according the paranoid, religious beliefs or “recipes” to fill water from seven taps which are given by so-called alternative or folk physicians”, he explains. “The people with neurosis can confirm the effect of the treatment, but only people that have a kind of neurosis and not those that have diagnosed mental illness or a sick organ”, claims the physician psychiatrist.

”In no way you can say that medicine is trade.” This is the response received by any physician that works in health institution, but in practice there are many cases that prove otherwise. The patients, that recovered from the medical treatment of the folk physicians witness that they have found the “real” cure at the folk physicians. “There are 5 years as I’ve found my physician. Since the ably Remzi Sudoli arranged my knee on the right leg which I’ve displaced, without any medical intervention I do not go to the hospital anymore”, says Miftar. P. The 33-year-old person, who is a teacher by profession, completely believes to his physician. “Not even in the next 100 years I would not have agreed to get in the hands of the physicians in the orthopaedist hospital”, he says. Sudoli, meanwhile for 30 years is regulating bones, the displaced bones or sprained muscles or blocked tissue. Every day through his hands the patients pass like in front of the teacher. “I healed more severe cases then the displaced bones. Only I can’t regulate torn ligaments. There definitely you need surgical intervention in hospital done by a physician specialist.” Folk physicians such as Sudoli, claim that medicine is trade, but science of medicine does not accept that. Neither the Hospital Centre in Debar do not accept that “true healing” can be done out of the hospitals and by persons which do not have completed the relevant studies.

Practice with Sudoli indicates otherwise. He claims had cured cases where the hospitals had no success. “I have healed people who have visited not only hospital in Debar, but also specialist and professor physicians in Skopje or other clinic centres. I have healed even those people whom the physician had told them that the only way of healing is surgery”, he confirms. For complex cases he was even called to go in Tirana, Albania's capital.

Orthopaedists in hospitals without patients

To a child, who had displaced the upper of the bone leg (near the pelvis) physicians had told him that the only way of regulation is surgery. "Once I saw the X ray, I told to the others in the room to leave, except for the parents who helped me to keep the boy in the proper position. After five minutes he started to walk as he had no problem", explains that case Sudoli. They say that he got the trade from his mother, now deceased, Sibja, which was also prominent in this trade, even a bit more as she even regulated the broken bones. "As a child I was watching my mother how she was healing the patients. I helped her and she told me how to regulate and so I started to learn", he reveals and explains that his supreme specialty is to return to normal state the bone that "has been caught by the meat" i.e. that has been displaced from the muscle. He works mainly with x ray. "All patients know this, so before they come to me, they go to do X ray and afterwards they come here. Those who come without X ray I send them back to hospital to do the X ray and to come afterwards", explains Sudoli, who has learned the reading of X ray photography from a book. In the town of Debar there are other physicians as he, the physicians Irfan Balance Kaja and Hagi. The three of them almost have sent in pension all the orthopaedists from the hospital. Their fame has reached not only to the all towns in Macedonia, but their patients are coming from the foreign countries of Albania and Kosovo. In the archive of the orthopaedists Hospital Centre in Debar for last year are recorded around 50 medical treatments. That is the figure of patients that these three aforementioned physicians sometimes have only for a month period.

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Folk medicine, between the alternative and fraud

There are thousands of cases, when the "folk physicians" without a single day passed in school heal the sick people, even though it is temporarily. "We do not extend lives, but we heal patients for which the hospitals do not have medicaments", says the folk physician from Shtip, which prepares the medicaments for patients with cancer for more than 20 years. Biljana Petrevska, from Skopje, says that her mother for 10 years is treating the cancer with syrup of the "physician" Gordana.

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People with the "supernatural" powers who provide medical services are still "fashionable" in Macedonia. There are hundreds of such people who prefer to call themselves "physicians" operating in improvised facilities without being harassed by anyone, and of course are financially motivated by clients which

are in relatively large number. Although they act contrary to law, which does not accept the practice of the alternative medical services outside of the licensed health care institutions, folk physicians operate successfully in almost all strata of society, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion or level of education. Physicians and specialist physicians prefer to downplay the role of folk physicians by saying that “their patients are mostly people without education, but in practice it is impossible to make classification or categorization of patients, men and women, educated and uneducated, children, young and old are seeking cure from folk physicians. Physicians and specialists relate their “miracle” to the suggestions and the current impact that there is belief in the improvement of the health condition and physical wellbeing. However, within the field of the alternative medicine there are infiltrated many rogues who exalt further the thesis that medicine can be practiced at home and in primitive conditions.

”Treatment” of cancer with honey and wine

Without a single day at school, folk physicians have become part of medicine trade, while some of them have gained so much fame, as they have success with their patients and are known not only in the town where they practice, but beyond it. Thus, in the eastern town in Macedonia, Shtip, Gordana M. prepares syrup against cancer.

Biljana Petrevska, from Skopje, says that her mother for 10 years is treating the cancer with the syrup of “the physician” Gordana. “Syrup is a mixture that reduces the spreading of the cancer and destroying cancer cells. It contains healthy ingredients: honey, wine, a special type of white coffee and a kind of flower from the plant of Aloe Vera. This medicament increases the patient's immunity and thus emerges as the winner on the disease”, explains Gordana. They say that she has inherited the profession folk physician from her mother-in-law, Kalinka, which was also known for preparing the medicaments for various malignant diseases. “We do not extend life as the life is in the hands of God, but we only cure it. If there is something that causes disease, there must be a medicine that destroys it”, comments “physician” and claims that annually she prepares hundreds of bottles of medicine for the patients from all over Macedonia.

”Albanians, Turks and Bosnians are coming, not only Macedonians”, explains 47 year old Gordana M. from Shtip, who is dealing with this profession for 20 years. Before she committed her-self to this profession of being “physician”, she was working in store selling bread. “When my mother-in-law, now deceased, became old she needed assistance as she was not able to respond to all requests. I decided to quit my job at the store and help her. At the beginning I did not want to get into this profession, I did it just for the sake of those people who were coming and seeking cure.”

”Out” of the law

Physicians and specialists at the Institute for radiotherapy and oncology, in Skopje claim that is totally unacceptable the treatment of cancer with a therapy that includes herbs. They don't even want even to mention “such tales”, as they call the stories of healing with folk medicaments. “It is not so

easy. Cancer is a disease that destroys the organs in the human body and it is so naive to say that can be cured with honey and wine. In any case, honey and wine can increase patients' physical strength, but not cure the disease. Otherwise, why we would use therapies with medical treatments and spent hundreds of thousands euro for devices, when with those money they can buy "endless strength", the wine and honey to heal all patients" responds the oncology specialists. According to Dr. Radmila Manevska, what is actually cheating and can mislead the patients or their relatives is the impact of patient confidence on disease. "The power of faith, as mental condition affects on some patients to easily overcome the disease, but certainly can not cure it." "The physician" Gordana admits that her patients are mostly in a seriously confused state of mind and mental condition. "Patients that come here have lost their hopes. They come with weaken and broken soul. I know that the medicament has given the desired effect when patients come for more. This is the biggest satisfaction for me", she explains and says the same patients are coming for two, three, four or ten years.

The practice of the folk physicians in Macedonia is not regulated by law. There were some initiatives for their work to be incorporated into the legal health system, but due to infiltration of fraud physicians, even the group of the genuine folk physicians was left out. "First of all we can not provide proof and assurance that they can heal with their therapies, and second the ones that are healing with folk medicament have to find mechanisms that will help to create a distinction between "real ones" and "fraud ones."

Denunciation

There is no data in the Ministry for Health about the exact number of folk physicians, the "real" or "fraud." "Other authorized institutions have to deal with the illegal activities", says the spokesperson.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs, meanwhile state that they can not identify all folk physicians, as MIA can only act based on cases of fraud or abuse. "During the period from 2000 to 2010 the Ministry of Interior affairs has prepared suits for seven "folk physicians" out of which two acts were registered in 2003, four in 2005 and in 2008, announces the spokesperson Ivo Kotevski. By the regions, he says that three cases are recorded in the region Ohrid, two in Strumica and one in Bitola and Shtip. All cases were related to fraud, they have asked huge amount of money for the service and after the "patients" did not noticed any change, and they have reported the "fraud physicians" to the police department. Inspectors at the Ministry of Interior Affairs say that in Macedonia exist greater number of so-called "folk physicians", but the problem is that citizens are not willing to cooperate with the police for their detection. Thus, in the Tetovo and Gostivar region there are many camouflaged Muslim priests who claim that "can remove the spell" or heal the "people possessed by the evil spirit." Even in the town of Ohrid, there are of those that "heal" with crosses and icons and "remove the evil" and send people to fill water from seven taps, and ask you to leave a gift at each of them.

Spiritual healing

“The priest Risto”, as is known in Ohrid, where he lives, during the therapy urges people to write on their own palms the lessons and according to this plan they can follow which days and from which tap-waters they should start to fill in water and where exactly to leave the presents. In the district of Skopje, there is no single village without at least one “Mullah” (religious title) who according to the books and notebooks with old covers heals people. In the village of Ljubin, so-called “the village Mullah” claims that he is the best in the region. He studied in Arab countries and he managed to materialize that quite well and earn credits for him-self. They say that he practices one “human profession” even though he never rejects the given money. “There are some diseases that medicine can not heal. Those are diseases of the soul. Doctors in the hospitals can cure diseases of the body (even though not all of them, unfortunately), but they can not cure diseases of the soul, as there are no medicaments for them. The organs within body are vulnerable, and when they become sick you treat them with medicaments. But when it comes to soul even though they want, they do not have medicaments to intervene” explains the “village Mullah”, who claims that he owns the knowledge to heal with the “spiritual” intervention in the treatment of soul diseases. He is also the owner of four companies, where he has more then 100 employees, but he does not leave aside the work with treatment of patients who have spiritual diseases. “In the summer season, when there are more weddings, I heal many brides from magic, especially the ones from Tetovo”, he explains further and adds that he is healing even and hiccough cases. According to his memories many years ago, a bride from Tetovo was seeking treatment in hospital in the city, but with no success. The doctors could not stop the hiccough. “I came at one house where were the bride relatives who have heard about me and brought me in the hospital and after five minutes, the bride left the hospital. I healed her immediately, of course without drip or medicaments”, he explains. In the hospital in Tetovo they say that they have ever had a patient suffering from hiccough.

Worms removed from eyes?!

Among the especially strange folk treatment is the “extraction” of worms from the eyes and ears, especially at children’. For more then 40 years, this wonder is practiced by two Roma women in Debar. The doctors will call you ignorant if you believe in this, as they call it the “banal and sad” story. But the “beautiful” part, according to the mothers is that after the worms are removed from children they sleep quietly at least a week. The only tool for this “healing” is a pen; a part of which closely approaches the tip of the eye (lat. *medialis palpebrales*) or the crevices of the ear piece that according to the medicine language is known as *Meatus acusticus exterus*. The “bride Zene” is name of the women which successfully removes worms from children in this town and the children from other countries; she has no idea about the medicine names for the places out of which she removes the worms. “The trade was left to me by my mother-in-law”, she confirms and shows the white pen and “collection of worms” that she has just removed from a 7 months old baby. The baby’s mother, a 37-year-old Safia says that she often comes here; almost every week and pays 0.6 euro per removed worm. “Once she removed two worms from the left eyes, while almost all the times she was removing for seven or

eight worms from the ears, sometimes even more". She says that once she even did the same treatment to a doctor's daughter.

"You can't do anything to stop its crying. So, I came here as here I found the cure," says Safia. She believes to "physician" as when ever the worms are removed, the girl is relaxed. "She will sleep comfortably as lamb, at least 5 or 10 days. Before we came here, the girl was crying for two days, she had her hands on the ears and scratching them".

"I heard about this from people who have been there by them-selves or their children were treated by removing the worms from ears or eyes. I heard that they have had 10 or 20 worms removed. What to say. I personally do not believe in this. First of all, there is no enough space there to hold so many worms at one place in the eye or ear gap. Do not believe in these things, as they can not be proved by the science", comments Dr. Shkelqim Sela, psychiatrist. Sela, a doctor psychiatrist that works at the hospital centre of Debar, explains such phenomenon with the people' paranoia and neurosis, which according to him want to believe in something, so they have cranks. Few years ago, all tests were made to highlight the fraud of the Leke, the so-called famous woman with worms, but it was without success. The parent of a child, "patient" says that they have tested Leke. They did not send the child there, but had asked her to come at their home. They sat at the table to eat together with family. We offered her coffee and juice to ensure that there are no worms hidden in her mouth and we gave her different pen, purchased from a store. However, after they lapped the child which was laying there and crying, the Roma woman rubbed his eyes and took out a pile of worms from both eyes.