

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOMEDICINE IN THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA: A FOCUS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

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Abstract:

Ethnomedicine and herbal healing have been used in the Caribbean for hundreds of years and is still in use today. This study examines how ethnomedical practices are used in the United States within the Caribbean diaspora located here. Specifically, this project seeks to understand how and why women use these practices to promote women's health. Caribbean people have immigrated to the United States in various waves. New York City has one of the largest Caribbean populations in the U.S. One way they have maintained cultural traditions is in form of healing and medicine. This research studies the usage of herbal medicine in the United States, more specifically the New York City area by people of Caribbean descent.

The methodologies used in this study included an anonymous online survey. The purpose of the survey was to see if and how herbal medicine has been incorporated into their lives growing up. Interviews were later conducted with women over the age of 40 who were born and raised in the Caribbean to understand the culture behind their medicinal background, how they learned that knowledge, how much of those practices they use and how it is used for women's health. Similarities in women's health concerns have emerged within the Caribbean diaspora. Recognizing these issues and women's health needs and practices can benefit promoting health within the Caribbean diaspora and within Western forms of medicine.