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## Reflection methods of “traditional medicine” in medical practice in the conditions of Kazakhstan National Public Health formation.

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is devoted to traditional medicine, its role and status in the modern health care and medicine. Traditional medicine is a form of existence and development of culture and medical knowledge having been forming over the centuries. The paper deals with the interactions of science and medicine, its integration possibility into the modern health care system, and the attitude of the state and the public to alternative methods of treatment. It describes definitions and methods of traditional medicine, the reasons for its preservation and popularity, specifies the historical and practical value of this phenomenon during the formation of the national health system in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** traditional medicine, modern medicine, alternative medicine, national health care, complementary medicine, healing, Islam, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the XXI century, the mankind faces an issue about the value of health as an important human resource. Environmental, socio-economic and political problems make us think about additional life support methods for our organisms. The use of herbal remedies and alternative treatments, the techniques and methods developed and tested by our ancestors for centuries, are of interest and require their reconsideration. Traditional medicine is the preferred and available type of health care in many parts of the world, and continue gaining its popularity in other countries [1]. The interest in traditional medicine focuses not only on its natural products, but also on the use of methods and the activity of traditional healers in the official medicine. Relevance of the research is in its theoretical, socio-political and historical-cognitive value, as well as in practical application - the study of the popular methods of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases will contribute to the development and integration of techniques of traditional medicine into modern healthcare system.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The tasks set in the course of the research such as disclosing the concepts of "traditional medicine", "modern medicine", etc.; identifying the factors and major areas of use of traditional medicine and the activities of healers, as well as analyzing the integration processes of traditional medicine in Kazakhstan healthcare system have predetermined the application of mainly historical methods of cognition. Analysis of official documents of the World Health Organization and the studies by Western authors have helped us to reveal the theoretical and methodological basis of the history of medicine, the ethnographic and religious patterns of people living in the region under study.

## RESULTS

Since ancient times, the ability to treat people was regarded as the greatest gift, and healers and doctors were considered the most esteemed members of society. The XX century was marked for the global health care by a modern, professional organization for the prevention of acute infectious diseases and the use of chemical drugs in therapy. Socio-economic changes, scientific achievements and organizational measures have led to significant changes in social health and the reduced morbidity and mortality [2]. Another area of medical knowledge, preserved from ancient times and expressing the people's wisdom and experience, began to lose its importance with the scientific development of medicine and pharmacology, and was opposed to official medicine. However, the humanity in the modern period of the environmental, economic, and social problems and the politicization of the public health system has been exposed to new challenges beyond the control of biomedicine, and forced to seek solutions in the integration of innovative technologies and scientific advances to medical practices of the past. Supporters of traditional medicine, which quality, safety and efficacy are confirmed by historical experience, are aware of its importance and role in a primary element of health care; traditional treatments and healers themselves become culturally, socially, and financially more attractive and acceptable [3].

Traditional medicine as a phenomenon cannot be accurately described, expressing a variety of signs and points of view. Subject to the historical, cultural, philosophical and religious factors, traditional medicine can be systematized, adjustable, open and widely practiced, and can use the experience gained over many centuries. Otherwise, it can be secret, mysterious, personal or local with the skills transmitted only orally, or may come from the typical physical signs or supposed supernatural forces. Therefore, taking into account all the contradictions and definitions, the World Health Organization has introduced an integrated concept of "traditional medicine".

In 1978, Alma-Ata WHO declaration for the first time in history proclaimed the universal right to health and priority of primary health care, and also suggested the term "traditional medicine", treating it as a set of knowledge and practices, either tractable or intractable, which are used in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of physical, mental and social imbalance, and is based solely on experience and observations handed down from generation to generation, either orally or in writing. It includes practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs, as well as medications of herbal, animal, or mineral origin, spiritualist therapy, manual therapy, and exercises, practiced individually or in combination, for maintenance of well-being, as well as for treatment, diagnosis and prevention of diseases [4, 5]. "Traditional medicine" is an integrated term referring

to both the systems of traditional medicine (e.g., Chinese, Indian, Arab Medicine), and various forms of medicine of indigenous people. A number of countries use definitions such as "extra" and "alternative" medicine along with the term "traditional medicine" to identify existing types of health care practices falling outside their own tradition and not integrated into the main healthcare system. The relationship between traditional medicine and biomedicine is expressed in the term "complementary medicine" [6]. Thus, the equivalents of the term "traditional medicine" can be traditional, complementary, alternative, extra medicine, etc.

The growing interest in traditional medicine in the era of globalization and scientific progress is due to socio-cultural, political and economic reasons. As Western researchers note, an increase in demand for alternative services occurs at a time of significant social changes, when many people challenge the existing social norms and values and make their choice in favor of alternative lifestyles. This trend is associated with the emergence of "medical counter-culture", in other words, a subculture opposite to dominant medicine [7].

Factors such as the lack of availability of qualified medical personnel, especially in the mountain villages, low population density, its remoteness from health centers, as well as an attempt to preserve the national identity and unique culture of the people have promoted the existence and preservation of traditional medicine, which was officially prohibited in the Soviet Kazakhstan. We shall note that alternative medicine was existing latently in the system of official medicine of the USSR as an object of scientific interest and informal medical practice [8].

At the end of the XX century as a result of the collapse of the USSR, the political and socio-economic problems have affected the sphere of spiritual and material life of the people. A sharp decrease in the level of quality of life, demographic problems, transition to a market economy, disappointment in the methods of scientific medicine, lack of access to highly professional health care, and lack of confidence in the future life contributed to the growing interest in traditional medicine and the revival of religious tradition. Some alternative techniques represent traditional values of the Kazakh and other ethnic cultures, and express the ancient Oriental wisdom [9].

Basics of a healthy lifestyle of the Kazakhs, such as hygienic skills of storing, preparing and consuming the widest range of food in the absence of habits of alcohol and tobacco consumption, practicing of household and sexual hygiene, the variable national sports games, etc. were the basis for the prevention of many serious diseases. They were carefully handed down from generation to generation, and were firmly established themselves in national traditions of Kazakh culture [10]. The development of political, trade and cultural relations through the Great Silk Road with the nearest neighbors in the Middle Ages enriched and supplemented Kazakh traditional medicine with various methods of diagnosis and treatment. Having demonstrated its efficiency for many centuries, the Kazakh healers still use the methods of prevention and rehabilitation such as: 1. Use of protective forces of nature (dousing with cold water, the use of therapeutic mud, different baths with birch leaves, sand, etc., hot mineral springs), 2. Methods of physical effect (massage, elements of "uzu" manual therapy, bone setting, physical exercises, combat sport "kures" fisticuffs, national games, etc.), 3. Methods of self-control ("Oraz" fasting, saunas, steam rooms, baths, moxibustion, "shabaktau" acupuncture), 4. Use of herbs (baths, lotions, tinctures), 5. Methods of psychotherapy (shamanic healing, "hoodoo killing" hypnosis, etc.), and 6. use of camel (shubat) and horse milk (kumiss) as the prevention of gastrointestinal diseases, prevention and treatment of tuberculosis.

The influence of Islam and other traditional religions was also reflected in the methods and techniques of traditional medicine. Historically, the dominant religions in Kazakhstan were Sunni Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Islam has coexisted in synthesis with elements of Tengrianism and national beliefs. The worship to ancestral spirits (aruaham), a pilgrimage to the holy places, visits to the mausoleums, tombs of Sufis and batyrs (warriors) was considered one of the methods of treatment of diseases, and the wearing of amulets, the charms, hypnosis, and divination ensured protection from disease. Prohibited in the official Islam (and Christianity), these techniques and therapies were used in combination with Islamic methods and found expression in a variety of healing methods that involved reading of Sunnahs from the Koran, etc. Most of modern healers do not consider their activities as contrary to the religious laws, they combine voodoo methods with reading prayers from the Bible or the Koran, and regard themselves as healers with a God-given talent.

Thus, the traditional medicine of ethnic groups having lived in the territory of Kazakhstan since ancient times, "the great medical traditions" - the Chinese, Tibetan, Ayurvedic and Arab-Persian medicine have influenced the healing practice and been used along with a magical-religious component of the ancient Kazakh medicine, with involving new techniques and methods that came from other republics of the former Soviet Union and Western countries.

The establishment of Traditional Medicine Center (1990) and the Association of traditional healers of Kazakhstan (1991) under the support of Ministry of Health, aimed at support of the study of traditional medicine, cooperation with the representatives of official medicine, politicians, health experts, psychologists etc. in regard to the quality and safety of the techniques, the issue of licenses to healers and provision of training standards and priorities for scientific research, has contributed to the revival of traditional medicine.

World-famous methods of traditional medicine such as Chinese-Korean versions of acupuncture, manual therapy, homeopathy, and hirudotherapy began to be officially used in private and public health facilities since the mid-90s. There was also a special segment officially called "traditional medicine" in public documents, consisting of the Kazakh spiritual healing techniques (practicing shamans - baksy), folk herbalists, bone setters, and psychic mediums who use a new kind of treatment - "bioenergy". The first step towards integration and merging of traditional medicine and science was the training of doctors of Oriental Medicine (2004) at Almaty Medical University.

However, the increase in demand for alternative services and the growth of a huge number of professionals without a medical degree or license has led to the emergence of "quackery", low-skilled methods and unjustified techniques, posing a threat to physical and mental health of the patient, as well as its financial well-being. Although the concept of "quack" has emerged and been used for a long time by physicians against alternative medicine [11], the Ministry of Health began to officially recognize the representatives of traditional medicine, and issue licenses for their therapeutic activity. Traditional medicine (healing) was legalized by legislation - Article 64 of the Law of RK "On protection of public health in the Republic of Kazakhstan" of May 19, 1997, and then the Code of RK "On people's health and the healthcare system" of September 18, 2009 included a separate Article 54 "Modern medicine, traditional medicine (healing)", which states that:

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1. The methods of traditional medicine include homeopathy, hirudotherapy, manual therapy, reflexotherapy, phytotherapy, and treatment by means of natural origin.
  2. Persons with medical education and an appropriate license have the right to work in the field of traditional medicine.
  3. Traditional medicine (healing) - a set of the accumulated by the people empirical information on the remedies, as well as medical and hygiene techniques and skills and their practical application for the preservation of health, and prevention and treatment of diseases.
  4. The use of the methods of traditional medicine (healing) by individuals is carried out on the basis of a certificate issued by the health organizations accredited by the authorized body. Individuals who have received this certificate shall be included in the register of healers of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The forms of the certificate and registry of healers of Kazakhstan, as well as the procedure for its maintenance are approved by the competent authority<sup>1</sup>.
  5. Mass healing sessions, including with the use of mass media, are prohibited [12].
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The rational alternative methods of treatment, which had managed to demonstrate the closest relation to biomedicine, received the state support. Thus, the healers, representatives of traditional medicine, got the opportunity to conduct an open and legal activity that does not contradict the state policy in the field of medicine and public health.

## DISCUSSION

After the Alma-Ata conference in 1978, there arose a global movement towards integration, mutually beneficial co-existence of traditional and scientific medicine. Health systems in many countries have been

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph was excluded in accordance with the Law of RK No. 36-V of 10.07.12

gradually becoming more tolerant, combining the recognized medicine and so-called “unofficial medicine” [13]. The existence and growth of institutions of traditional medicine, the number of their followers and customers, the integration and interaction with the official healthcare system are examples of the state and public interest in complementary medicine. In the new millennium, the medical activities related to the methods of traditional medicine gain an increasing importance not only in Kazakhstan, but also throughout the world.

### CONCLUSION

According to WHO, traditional medicine, which is part of the national culture, attracts the public and state interests in the modern world. many countries recognize now the need to develop a coherent, integrated approach to health care, which allows governments, experts and, most importantly, those who use health services, having access to traditional and complementary medicine in a safe, valid, cost-effective and efficient way [14].

Traditional medicine in the Kazakh society continues to exist along with scientific medicine, as part of the general medical culture. For the first time in Kazakhstan there were established laws proclaiming traditional medicine a part of the healthcare system, and the healer - the subject of its activity. Official medicine gradually becomes more open to new or well-forgotten, but legitimated today means and techniques of healing [15], which means the recognition of traditional medicine and the use of its capabilities in the healthcare system of Kazakhstan.

In terms of socio-economic and political reforms, there is a need for interaction and close cooperation of all the institutions of civil society, which purpose is to preserve the health, provide a continuous connection between the physical and spiritual health, promote healthy lifestyles and preserve the gene resources of the nation, at the same time, the diagnostic and treatment process should be a complex including a variety of social non-medical and medical factors. The way to improvement of quality of traditional medicine through the integration of official and traditional medicine and engagement of health experts, politicians, representatives of traditional medicine and the clergy will contribute to the revival of spiritual and moral traditions of Kazakh society.

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