

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****SOME MATERIALS ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE OF
CHECHENS (BASED ON ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS)**

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Abstract

Traditional medicine is understood as the totality of empirical information accumulated by the people about healing agents, medicinal herbs, hygiene skills, as well as their practical application for maintaining health, preventing and treating diseases. The lack of written information deprived the Chechens of great wealth, since the traditional oral method of transferring knowledge is not always complete and accurate. Traditional medicine today increasingly attracts the attention of not only physicians and biologists, but also ethnologists. It seems that this interest is caused primarily by the fact that modern methods of treatment have not yet exhausted the possibilities of using the centuries-old and diverse experience of peoples in the field of medicine. This is what determines the urgency and practical significance of the problem considered in the article. The study of the traditions of treatment makes it possible to use them in our time, since the accumulated rich positive experience of traditional medicine continues to develop. The results of using traditional folk methods of treatment in some cases is an indicator of their usefulness. Since the experience of traditional medicine can serve as a source of useful information for official medicine, the materials of the presented article may have some practical value. To reveal this problem, in addition to scientific literature, field materials collected by the author during ethnographic expeditions in the villages of Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as in the villages of the republics of the North Caucasus (1979–1995) were involved.

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1. Introduction

Traditional medicine is understood as the totality of empirical information accumulated by the people about healing agents, medicinal herbs, hygiene skills, as well as their practical application for maintaining health, preventing and treating diseases.

An indicator of worldview and life experience should be considered traditional medicine, which is also an essential part of the culture of any nation, including the Chechen. The lack of written information deprived the Chechens of great wealth, since the traditional oral method of transferring knowledge is not always complete and accurate.

2. Problem Statement

The study of traditional medicine of Chechens is a complex and multifaceted problem, since it can serve as a source of useful information for official medicine.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the research is the analysis of ethnographic materials on folk medicine of the Chechens.

The article also discusses:

1. various means used by Chechens for the treatment of both plant and animal and mineral origin;
2. national methods of treating childhood diseases.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to study and analyze the historical experience of Chechens in the field of traditional medicine, as a part of traditional culture with practical value.

5. Research Methods

The study used general methodological approaches for historical and medical research using the historical method, comparative, system, medical and ethnographic analysis, as well as interviewing.

6. Findings

In national medicine, Chechens, like other peoples, distinguish two interdependent and interrelated directions: household, which can be considered a carrier of every person and every family; and the second direction – professional – the bearers of this direction were already certain people: folk healers, "lors"; and priests, "хума хууш болу нах".

The most famous in Chechnya were the "lors" from the village of Maisty (Mountainous Chechnya). In the essay on the socio-economic state of Mountain Chechnya, published in the collection,

it is written, “Where goats fall from a steep, people mow and sow grain! However, almost every Maistian has either a broken leg or a broken head. Here, to my amazement (author, Z. Kh.), I even found surgeons with peculiar surgical instruments: hooks to push the skin on a punctured head, tweezers to pull out skull fragments from the brain and a scraper to scrape bones... ”(Archive ChR, 1927).

According to the well-known Chechen writer Kh.D. Oshaev, many Maistin "doctors", including I. Bachashvili (a Maistin who moved to Georgia), possessed the art of craniotomy, and folk healers-Georgians were also able to perform craniotomy. "In Khevsureti, healers were able to perform craniotomy. Homemade wooden and iron instruments were used for the operation: a small knife that served as a lancet, an iron scraper, tweezers... In the 19th century, the practice of craniotomy was also known in Svaneti” (as cited in Mindadze, 2015, p. 71).

Few of the famous folk healers were "experts in all areas of medicine". More often, doctors had a "narrow" specialty: some practiced the use of herbal remedies, others were bone-setters, still others acted as midwives and "specialists" in women's diseases, etc.

Each village had its own healers – men and women. Women mainly treated internal diseases, were engaged in "therapy", and men were more bone-setters, dominated in "surgery". This should also explain the fact that men used more rational means, and women turned to magical actions.

A researcher of the life of the Chechen people noted that in every Chechen village there were doctors. He wrote: "Each village has its own healers for the treatment of diseases". He also pointed out that since ancient times, surgeons have been especially famous (among the Chechens). In addition to skillful dressing of wounds and reduction of dislocations, brave Chechen surgeons perform craniotomy. To do this, with bruises and depressions of the skull, and sometimes just with restless headaches, surgeons use a special chisel to scrape the skull to the very membranes of the brain (Pantyukhov, 1901).

Among the Chechens there were skilled master healers, whose names, thanks to the memory of the people, have come down to us. These are Motsuev from the village of Chu're aul of the Shalinsky district, Soslanbek from the Bekmurzaevs from the village of Valerik in the Achkhoy-Martanovsky district, Vashaev Edil-Solta from the village of Urus-Martan of the Urus-Martanovsky district, Shovkhal T1'akhi from Kurchaloy, later his daughter, Pettim, was engaged in treatment.

It should be noted that none of the healers had scientific methods and had no scientific means of dealing with human disease. And therefore, when treating nervous patients, the Motsuevs from the Shali region used magic rituals along with really rational methods: they used occupational therapy, tempered the body with water and air. Traditional medicine of the Chechens also had many other rational methods of treating patients from various diseases.

All diseases, according to popular beliefs, arose for a number of reasons: some as a result of physical impact (bullet and knife wounds, sprains, fractures, dislocations and bruises); others, under the influence of natural factors – colds (Batayev & Khasbulatova, 2012). A special place in the causes of diseases was occupied by the common cold – "шелонца кхета цамгар", "кирахъа шелвелла", "корта шелбелла", in addition, diseases such as "chest diseases", "muscle aches", "bones" – "ан", "энаш" – and others (Gabaev, 1986).

Our informant from the village of Starye Atagi said that “халха нахана човнаш хилара, талла вахчи, ловзаргахъа, мичгтхъа лелачохъа. КЮргачу чевнна туъха а тосий, кхехкина хъелин даьтта

дүүллура. Чевнна тосуш леладора сийна молха, цо йоьрзош йолу чов, буьйдачу морзи чу сода тосий, кисица д'айоьхкура» - in the past, wounds were received during hunting, at weddings and other events. The wounds were washed with saline and smeared with fresh butter, then again with saline and butter until healed (Takhaeva, 1986; Tovmurzaev, 1986). Also, the through wound was cleaned out with an iron rod, smeared with honey, then smeared with melted butter until it was cured, added our other informant Askhabova Shaiman from the same village of Starye Atagi. Fresh herbs and herbs in the form of powders and infusions have also been widely used in wound healing. So, for example, wormwood juice ("юшпа") was used to cleanse and heal wounds. Old wounds, festering from stuck bullets, were cleaned out with the help of mushrooms boiled in vinegar or sour whey. The stems and leaves of the oregano cleansed the wound, and the wild mint served as a styptic. Fresh cuts or a wound were treated with buckwheel ("чов буц" – "wound grass"), either fresh or dry; the wounds were also anointed with burdock oil (Khasbulatova & Madaeva, 2012; Dudaeva, 1986).

V.V. Markovich wrote that this herb was used to treat wounds: As the name itself shows, this herb is used to treat wounds. I must say that the Chechens are masters of healing wounds, and this plant is considered the surest remedy. They chew dry or damp grass and put it on wounds or on a cut and say that healing occurs remarkably soon (as cited in Khasbulatova & Madaeva, 2012). It was popularly believed that this herb prevents the contamination of the wound "чевнан н'аьна ца бойту".

It is noteworthy that in the traditional medicine of the Chechens for centuries, passing from generation to generation, many sections known in scientific medicine have survived: the use of various methods and methods of physical influence in the treatment: heat, cold, massage; the use of all kinds of surgical techniques; treating childhood illnesses and caring for children; searching for and using medicinal herbs, medicinal products of animal and mineral origin; dietetics; the use in the process of treatment of means of psychological influence – suggestion, hypnosis, etc.

As noted, the Chechens used various remedies of both plant and animal origin for treatment. Most of them were associated with the occupation of the population, being at the same time products of agriculture, cattle breeding, beekeeping, hunting and fishing. And the main medicinal means of Chechens should be considered plants: herbs, berry bushes, woody plants, etc. Herbal medicine among the Chechens was widespread. Diversiflorous herbs were used as restorative, anti-inflammatory and tonic agents. In everyday use of the Chechens there were decoctions of common oregano – "Iаждар буц", thyme – "хьожа йог'у буц", tea grass – "чайн буц". These and other herbs had the properties of spices and this property was known to the Chechens from ancient times. There are two types of thyme in Chechnya: the marshall thyme and the hill thyme. The first one is used for seasoning various dishes: game, fillings, etc., and the second type is used as a medicine. So, for example, until now the herbs "Iаждар буц" and "хьожа йог'у буц" – thyme – are used together in the preparation of Kalmyk tea. The daily active use of various herbs was of preventive value. In the Chechens' view, oregano and mint were considered a panacea for nine diseases – "ис цамгарна дарба до хьожа йог'у бецо, Iаждар бецо" said and say older people. Decoctions of these herbs were drunk for coughs, allergies and headaches, etc.

For the purpose of prevention, in addition to decoctions, starting from early spring, they also consumed all kinds of fresh, boiled herbs, used as a filling for pies, dumplings, etc. (sorrel, nettle, wild garlic, cumin and other herbs).

It seems that a few should be said about all kinds of animal and mineral remedies used by the Chechens for treatment: for example, for pain in the joints they did hot baths or salt solutions were applied. Tuberculosis and bronchitis were treated with goat and bear fat, honey; there were other methods of treatment. Our informant from the village of Duba Yurt said that people knew that tuberculosis (йовхари лазар) was a contagious disease, but in order not to offend the patient they were not afraid, so tuberculosis was very common among Chechens. The patients were treated with milk with goat fat, butter and honey, which was given to drink in the morning and evening (Товбулатов, 1986). Similar treatment of tuberculosis was used by other peoples of the Caucasus, for example, the Ingush, Abkhaz, and others (Dzarakhova, 2013; Nachkebia, 2007).

Among the Chechens, such diseases as rheumatism and radiculitis were widespread; they were collectively called "энаш". They were treated with all sorts of means, including herbal medicine. For example, they drank a decoction of the roots of an edible herb, and the leaves of this herb were applied to the sore spot. For pain in the joints and lower back, they used "эни буц" or "хъарийн буц". "Эни буц" grows in bundles of 20-30 cm in size, erect stems with small pale green leaves. This herb is also called "хъарийн буц", and "хъамал" in Arabic.

In the Nadterechny district, our informants told about the herb, which was used either for rheumatic and gouty pains, the herb is called "эний буц". Informant Khasbulatov Khasmagomed from the village of Verkhniy Naur (Lekh Nevri) claimed that this herb is capable of curing more than 70 diseases: cough, paralysis, convulsions ("пхенаш ийзор"), contracture of the legs ("когаш тхъуз болар"), edema ("дестар") and many other diseases. According to the informant, the grass grows only in Priterechye, in particular, in Upper Naur and Galnekh. A decoction of this herb was used instead of tea for a fresh illness for a week, and for 2 weeks for a protracted one. The broth is prepared as follows: take a bunch of fresh (or dried) herbs, scald with boiling water and brew. The broth is considered more healing with a high saturation. During treatment with this herb, it was not recommended to use other therapeutic agents (Khasbulatova & Madaeva, 2012).

Means of animal, mineral and other origin were also actively used as remedies by folk healers.

Separately, it is worth settling on such a method of treatment as "хинжа баккхар" – extraction of nits. Psoriasis is a chronic non-infectious disease, dermatosis, which mainly affects the skin. As a rule, psoriasis is manifested by the formation of red, excessively dry, raised spots above the surface of the skin – the so-called papules – which merge with each other forming plaques. It is a genetic disease that is transmitted through the female line. One or more plaques appear on the body, which is accompanied by itching and burning. According to our informants, such phenomena were observed from the new moon to the full moon, and then the burning sensation could subside, with the new moon everything started anew. In such cases, the Chechens said that there was a "nit". There were few "specialists" who knew how to treat this disease. The "operation" was carried out in this way: the healer took an unused needle and sterilized it with fire. After a proper examination in the area of the shoulder blades, the woman found a red dot, where it was supposed to find a "nit", and pricked this place with a needle, after which, slowly and carefully twisting the needle, she pulled out the thread-like fiber, i.e. nit. This method of treatment, I think, should be attributed to one of the acupuncture options. Among the population, this method was considered quite effective and in some cases is used up to the present time.

“Сан нанна хаара хинжа баккха, амма цуьна ницкъ кIезга бара, цун дела цо сега оза байтора, цюна бара кхо са болу маха, цхьана пIелгал беха а болуш. Малх болчу уIйринна шина пханар юккъера жижиг схьа а лоце лохара цо хинжи орам болу меттиг. 3-я 5 тIеда ахкара цо. И тIеда малхе вижчи бей тIе а ца балара. ТIаккха цуьнан орам болу меттиг карийча цо мехаца буткъа чилла санна болу къай хьаса баккара озабой и озо хала а дара, онда бара хьаса. Ша давккхинчу Iуьрга Iаьржа тоьпа молха диллара. Сан нана йолчу Грознера а уьхара нах. ДегIа тIе даI а доле, дегI къамлуш, бIаьргиш къамлуш, серло а кхулле хуьле хинжа баьлчи. Дей-буьсий даллац хинжа баькхинчул тIьха хих вала мегш а дацара – орам хоттало оли. Цхьац волчунна 1–2 баьккхичи а гIоли хулера, цха волчунна дуккху а лаха безара, нагахь дегI стомма хелчи. Суна бара хинжа, тха нанас маха тухьира, дIа бакхира -са бIеьргах хиш тухьсара, ноткъанаш а мекъалгаш тухьсара, дегI кIамлора – my mother knew how to perform this operation, but she did not have the strength and therefore I performed this operation under her guidance. She had a finger-long needle with three corners. On a sunny day, I looked for a root between the shoulder blades and, finding a needle, slowly pulled out a thin thread, and sprinkled gunpowder into the place from where the nit was pulled out. The place itched, turned red. For several days it was impossible to wet, they said that the root can grow back together. At the same time, the eyesight became weaker, our informant Vakhaeva Apa from the village of Starye Atagi, 1991, said. There was also a woman in Dachu-Borzoi who knew how to carry out such treatment. People came to her from afar, her name was Phaanzha, - said our informant Apa Vakhayeva.

One of the common types of magic was healing magic, which accompanied quite rational methods of healing. The cause of many diseases was considered to be supernatural beings – jinns – transformed with the adoption and spread of Islam into shaitans. Jinns are incorporeal spirits, once corporeal and visible beings. Many of our informants said that in the past they (jinns) were visible – “хьалха сан де дас а, де нанась а дийцара – шайтанаш цхац болчу наха даца дора”.

The places of their habitation were considered to be where people settled (“вайна юккъях” – among us), they also dwelled in mountains, forests, rivers, ravines, etc. Their special activity was related to the night time. Over time, the spirits considered it safer for themselves to settle in the people themselves, many informants said during the collection of the materials. They also noted that there are as many spirits as there are people, and the same thing happens to them as to the people in which they live: they are born, live, marry and die. Even in the recent past, following our field data, the spirits were visible, as evidenced by many informants. For example, Ya.I. Suleimanov from the village of Vedeno in 1982 said that as a child he often saw spirits in the morning leaving in vans, lighting fires and cooking food. However, when he got closer, the spirits disappeared. Since spirits live everywhere, the informants noted, they can be stumbled upon, stepped on, frightened or injured, that is, stumble upon the place of their meal – “жини пхьобхьор”, touch their seed – “жини хIух хьакхавелла”, get into the place of accumulation – “боьхачу кхетта”, to get a disease from the outside – “жини агIо”, etc. In this regard, there were numerous prohibitions: you cannot walk after sunset, while protecting yourself, your relatives, especially a young daughter-in-law and children, take sharp iron objects, coal, crumbs of bread, grains of wheat or corn, etc. This custom is still observed to some extent today. You cannot take water from a well or a spring after sunset, since water is a place where spirits gather, and the spirits themselves take water at

night, you cannot pour water anywhere, you should carefully pour it on the sidelines in a clean place, where people do not walk, etc.

It was considered the most dangerous to stumble upon jinns during their "wars" or fun, wedding.

According to the views of the Chechens, spirits, just like people, are Christians or Muslims – “керстана жинаш, бусулба жинаш” – and, naturally, there were disagreements between them. “According to traditional beliefs, there were two main varieties among the jinns – white and black or Muslim and Christian, Muslim and Jewish. In everyday life, the term "shaitans" was also used, both to denote jinns in general and in relation to specifically black non-Muslim jinns" indicates the Caucasian scholar, researcher of shamanism Bulatov (2004, p. 13).

Let us settle on childhood illnesses. In traditional methods of treating childhood diseases, there are also combinations of rational methods of treatment, which are based on empirical knowledge, with magical-religious actions. The latter also arose in the treatment of adults, if it was impossible to explain the malaise and identify its cause. Everything incomprehensible was attributed to evil spirits, various kinds of evil eye of people and animals. The "evil eye" possessed magical powers that could rob a child not only of health, but also of life. The Chechens knew several types of "evil eye": of a living person, especially parents and relatives, of a deceased – the offense of the deceased – "хьамм". The treatment consisted of “долл дустар”. Islamov (1972) wrote about this: “they tied a knot at one end of the scarf. Then from this she (the priest) measured the distance with her elbow to the opposite corner, while whispering a prayer spell to herself. The distance between these two points measured in this way served as the basis for diagnosis” (p. 56).

From all types of "evil eye" there were various charms, in the role of which were beads "чИж", stones with holes found after the rain, shells that multiplied under a dog feeder, twigs of hawthorn or quince, coal, red thread, bear claws, amulets, etc. Chursin (1929) wrote that “almost everyone (professing Islam, the peoples of the Caucasus – Z.Kh.) wear some kind of notes sewn into rags as some amulets” (p. 88). The Chechens, like all Muslim peoples, had amulets with the dictum from the religious prayers "доІа", which were sewn up by the eldest girl in a family whose parents were alive. Amulets were also practiced among other Caucasian peoples, for example, the Adygeis (Mafedzev, 1984).

The means of fighting against the evil eye was fumigation - "кIуп тохар". For this purpose, it was possible to burn a blue rag, pieces of cloth from the child's parents, onion and garlic husks, salt, thyme, a small amount of corn or other flour. There should have been 9 such parts; the combination could be different. All parts were mixed and set on fire. Fumigation was accompanied by a prayer with a request to carry away the disease with fire and smoke. A pinch of salt, carried over the head of a sick child or adult nine times and burned in the fire, could also be a means of fighting the "evil eye" (Tseldieva, 1984).

In case of the "evil eye", they also resorted to such a means as a "ловца бакхр" – they wrapped coal and salt in a green cloth, then walked to the intersection of three roads and, while untying the knot were saying “шадаца бегаболба”.

Йол лохьоца – лохьа болба
дольача хица голба,
хи соцучу сацаболба,
the contents were shaken

untie the knot let it shake off
let him gather with a pitchfork,
let it run away with the flowing water,
where the water stops – let it stop, our informant Khamatkhanova Padi noted,
There were also other remedies for the "evil eye" with a magical character.

When treating childhood diseases, the Chechens attached great importance to childcare, hygiene, diet, food restrictions, and the creation of a favorable atmosphere surrounding a sick child.

7. Conclusion

Summarizing what has been said, it should be noted that Chechen traditional medicine is based on positive folk knowledge in combination with various magical and religious remedies. It is difficult to separate thousands of years of practical knowledge from irrational treatments. They were closely related, but naturally, only folk remedies were effective.

Of course, the small volume of the article does not give us the opportunity to consider all aspects of traditional medicine, which are quite diverse, cognitive in scientific terms, and some are useful in practical terms.

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