

# Chapter 220

## Prevalence of headache in native populations: Peculiar interpretations of mental illness

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Regarding medicine, ethnic groups with ancient traditions have specific interpretations of certain pathologies. In this sense, neurological diseases gain prominence and within them, the famous headaches stand out, which have a high prevalence in almost all populations studied. The objective of this study is to evaluate different perceptions about neurological and mental illnesses, in addition to looking for studies

that show the prevalence of headaches in native populations, considering the housing scenario of Greater Dourados, which is home to varied ethnic groups.

## **2 MATERIAL AND METHODS**

Literature review carried out from data consultation in PubMed, Bireme and Scielo portals and related articles. of the Andean Altiplano. Such work has shown that the cultural interpretation of certain neurological pathologies by the group is extremely peculiar. From this perspective, epilepsy, for example, is interpreted as an evil spirit that enters through the nose and its treatment consists of ingesting a solution containing dry butterfly powder. Another study to assess the prevalence of headaches among Tupiniquim Indians in Brazil collected important data. The study's questionnaire to assess the topic was applied to 102 Indians. The number of individuals who reported headaches in the last six months was 62 (60.7%). The six-month prevalence of headaches was 65.2% among women and 51.5% among men. In addition, 75% of individuals with migraine reported an impact on their activities and 37.5% had an impact more than once a month. An anthropological study carried out in Mahosik, a Mayan Tzeltal community of 250 inhabitants in the highlands of Chiapas, sought to obtain information about neurological and psychosomatic pathology in an ethnic and cultural environment different from ours. Mages and healers from the Tzeltal Maya tribe were interviewed to find out their thoughts on neurological and mental illnesses and the treatments used in that community. Headache was the fourth most common cause of consultation and the boiled leaves of the payté bush ("Tagetes neisonii") are used as a medicinal bath for treatment. Migraine is treated with the raw and crushed roots of the herbs "pox of chopak" and "bakte shell" along with the practice of cutting the patient with a piece of glass in the temporal region, deep enough to make him bleed. In this studied culture, epilepsy is caused by abuse suffered by the animal spirit that accompanies the individual, after a fight between the companion animal or the spirits that serve the forces of Good and Evil.

## **3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The review data demonstrated a huge cultural variety in the interpretation of mental and neurological phenomena, which helps to respect cultural differences and to know the thinking of these groups, which can reduce the chances of prejudice and increase the help that the current technology offers. Regarding headaches, there was a high prevalence among the Tupiniquim Indians in the national territory, which corresponds to the majority of the analyzed populations. Thus, with the knowledge of this fact, future advances in the area may allow greater coverage of the country to native groups.

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