TRADITIONAL HEALING AMONG THE INUPIAQ:
IMPORTANCE OF CARING FOR THE BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

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Surveys indicate that the vast majority, upwards of 90%, of people believe in some divine spirit.

The most used common form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine is prayer.

“This is the greatest error in the treatment of illness, that there are physicians of the mind and physicians of the body and yet the two are indivisible.” Plato
Healing needs to expand from the “body, mind and spirit into the more inclusive social, political, economic, metaphysical, ecological and cosmological dimensions of health care. At the same time, the secret dimensions of self and other require equal status with the physical and objective foundations of science.”

“Unlike the druid Celts, the Christians did not view themselves as integrated beings linked harmoniously to the world around them. Instead, they saw themselves as fragmented creatures with a spirit separated from nature, doomed to constantly war with the urges of their own bodies.”

“When Christ entered human form, he engaged in metempsychosis, in spiritual shape-shifting. This ritual was accepted custom among the druid shaman who assumed the spirit form of the wolf or the salmon in a quest for greater wisdom.”

The study of prayer is complex, in that it is challenging to control for what others are doing. It does appear to have positive effects. Transpersonal brain function associations have been achieved through the use of Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

A healer, praying for, or offering intended healing thoughts from a distance, resulted in the patient’s brain showing activities in the same areas as that of the healer.

The patterns of brain activity correlated to when the healers were requested to offer their skills.
With the concept of Candace Pert’s work on neuropeptides as the molecules of emotion, if someone can through thought or prayer influence the patient’s brain, then there is the potential for these molecules of emotion to be put into action for the improvement of well-being.

“Placebo drift” – The effectiveness of placebos appears to be changing over time. There are a number of current theories for why this is the case and investigators are trying to quantify this acknowledged shift.

It appears that the more people believe in a drug trial or experimental treatment, then there is more placebo effect.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Investigations that engage traditional healers who utilize mental intention.
  - Prayer requesting divine intervention
  - Accessing knowledge
  - Contributing healing thought

- Investigations on the level of patient “belief” in the healer and the subsequent outcomes.
These ancient-based ways may lead investigations into further insights as to the various forms of healing that are currently not utilized or understood by contemporary medicine and science.

However, investigations are taking place.

The National Library of Medicine supported the development of a 30 minute orientation video to Inupiaq traditional healing that is now available at www.arctichealth.org within the Traditional Healing section under Sharing and Teaching. “Understanding the Healing Hands of the Maniilaq Tribal Doctors.”
There are growing opportunities for community-based action research. The approach has resulted in a process of multicultural engagement for learning and understanding (MELU) that is documenting the advantages of utilizing traditional healing techniques to complement modern allopathic health services.
THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY

Are there questions please?

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