

## Traditional Medicine of the Biak Tribe in Opuri Village, Biak Regency Papua

Priskila Septina Womsiwor<sup>1</sup>, Marlina Flassy<sup>\*2</sup>, Usman Idris<sup>3</sup>, Simon Abdi K. Frank<sup>4</sup>

Anthropology Department, Universitas Cenderawasih, Jayapura City, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe and analyze the mechanism of traditional medicine practiced by the Biak people in Opuri Village, and the factors that determine why people still often use traditional medicine methods as an alternative to efforts to cure diseases suffered by them. The theoretical approach used is the perspective of medicine anthropology to examine the treatment of diseases that are naturalistic and personalistic in nature traditionally based on the ethnoscience of local communities. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with an ethnographic approach. Selection of informants was done by purposive sampling. The data collection techniques used were interviews and field observations as well as literature review. The research instrument used is a sound and image recorder to help facilitate the process of processing field data. The stages of data analysis include data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. The results showed that the use of traditional medicine methods is still carried out by the Biak people in Opuri Village because it aims to treat personalistic diseases, so that not only physical treatment is needed, but also metaphysical. Although there are also those related to naturalistic diseases. Meanwhile, the factors behind the use of traditional medicine methods are social, economic, cultural, and comfort factors.

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#### \*Corresponding Author:

Marlina Flassy  
Anthropology Department,  
Universitas Cenderawasih,  
Kampwolker Street Uncen Waena Campus, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences  
Department Anthropology, Jayapura City, 99351, Indonesia  
Email: [flassymarlina@gmail.com](mailto:flassymarlina@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Health is one of the most important aspects of human life so that healthy and sick events will affect the quality of human life (Endarti, 2015; Idris et al., 2021). In general, traditional medicine has been widely recognized for its use in Indonesia both for health maintenance or alternative treatment of certain diseases (Adiyasa & Meiyanti, 2021; A. P. Nugroho, 2022). However, without scientific studies, traditional medicine cannot be used for formal (modern) health services even though its efficacy has been empirically proven (Munaeni, dkk, 2022; Pranatha, 2023; Wahyuni, 2021).

Traditional medicine is the nation's cultural heritage that continues to be preserved and developed to support people's health (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Prasanti, 2017). Traditional medicine has certainly been tested for years based on experience and in accordance with cultural developments (Ilyas, 2020; Rahayu, 2006; Triratnawati, 2010). The medicinal plants used are plants that have been known to have efficacy and are safe when used to treat (Pratama, 2021; Sumayyah & Salsabila, 2017). Over time, people began to follow many changes in the modern world as well as in the use of drugs that must be tested first before being used in health services must meet quality requirements and have scientific evidence of their efficacy and safety which have been processed into pills or capsules (Jennifer & Saptutyingsih, 2015; Supriadi, dkk, 2021). This makes people a little hesitant and believe that it will reduce the efficacy of traditional medicine.

The belief is the existence of failure or conventional medicine, fear of excessive use of chemical drugs and resulting in them having to undergo medical action but not recovering from certain diseases. So this makes this belief encourage patients to look for other alternative treatments that are considered appropriate (Jennifer & Saptutyingsih, 2015; Supriadi, dkk, 2021). Based on the information and experience about the treatment received, patients will start looking for alternatives or try conventional medicine. This is the impetus or background for research on a disease that attacks others in a way that is somewhat difficult for some people to understand, because illness is a certain abnormal condition that negatively affects the structure or function of the entire body of a living being, and is not a direct result of external injury. Illness is also known as a medical condition that is associated with certain clinical symptoms and signs (Anwar, 2020; Djoht, 2002; Winkelman, 2008). Thus, human behavior in dealing with health problems is planned or patterned in a health system which is part of the culture of the community concerned, this is what is referred to as a traditional medical system or also known as ethnomedicine (Djoht, 2002; Foster & Andreson, 2013; Winkelman, 2008).

One of the cultures of the Biak people is traditional medicine which is considered capable of handling diseases caused by personalistic, namely in the treatment of diseases suffered by the community, such as stomach pain due to *ansne byor* (eating wrong) or wounds due to *boryas*, (curses or *jampi-jampi*). This cannot be separated from something that is sacred. Based on these objectives, it can then be described through 3 questions, namely why biak people still use traditional medicine, what types of diseases are treated with traditional medicine systems and how the disease treatment process. This is because in practice traditional medicine carried out by rural communities is based on the spiritual aspects of traditional sacredness. One example of what is sacred in medicine can be seen from the treatment process where religious elements or belief systems are always clearly visible in the treatment process.

Such as the community's trust and belief in the almighty creator which is reflected in ritual processes such as recitation of prayers or *jampi-jampi* from a socio-cultural point of view, one thing that indicates the existence of cultural acculturation between the modern medical system and the traditional medical system. The combination of these two cultural systems can also be studied more deeply using ethnographic analysis of the knowledge system of the local people of Opuri Village which is realized in maintaining their health. Therefore, this article aims to find out in depth that the community still uses personalized disease treatment in the midst of modern times.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method that aims to provide a descriptive description of how the Biak Tribe community in Opuri village is treated. In this study, the participant observation method is considered important because the researcher can directly observe the process of personalized disease treatment in the Biak Tribe in Opuri Village, West Biak District. Observations are made by being directly involved in community activities and can also be interspersed with interview techniques.

The main form of interview that will be used in this research is an in-depth interview with a number of key informants from interested groups. The technique of determining informants is determined by purposive sampling, namely key informants who are selected according to the criteria determined by the researchers themselves such as traditional leaders, elders, women and men who use this traditional medicine. There were 7 residents interviewed, 3 residents were natives of Opuri village, 4 people were not natives of Opuri village, the reason for choosing the seven informants was because they had knowledge related to traditional methods of involvement in order to recover from illness, if there were people who were affected by illness or disease.

Then, literature review and internet searches will also be used as data collection techniques. Through this technique, a variety of secondary data on the population and region of Biak as well as information on indigenous people from various parts of the world can be collected for the purpose of this study. The results of data collection through this technique will be integrated with the results of data collection through interviews and observations conducted in the field. The research instrument used is a sound and image recorder to help facilitate the processing of field data. Then the data analysis used in this study refers to the opinion of Miles & Huberman, regarding the stages of data analysis in qualitative research, namely through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Biak Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine is a type of alternative medicine that is still believed by some people, especially those in the villages, because it is considered to have efficacy that is more effective than modern medicine which refers to the treatment system developed by the west and standardization of the development of contemporary health science today (Anwar, 2020; Endarti, 2015; Wahyuni, 2021). Most traditional medicines are derived from plant-based ingredients and only a small percentage are derived from animal or mineral-based ingredients. The plant materials used can be whole plants, plant parts or plant exudates. Plant exudates are the contents of cells that are in some way removed from the cells, as well as other vegetable substances separated from the plant. It is clear here that medicinal plants are a very important source of material for the manufacture of traditional medicines in the world (Kurniawan et al., 2023; A. P. Nugroho, 2022; Prasanti, 2017; Wahyuni, 2021). Medicinal plants are easier to find and get by those who need them around their place of residence. It should be known that at least in Indonesia there are 940 types of plants that can be used as medicines (Adiyasa & Meiyanti, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2023; A. P. Nugroho, 2022).

The processing of traditional medicines varies, from those that are still done in a simple way to the use of advanced technology. In a simple way, ingredients derived from fresh plants in cracks are boiled with water in a cauldron to produce the liquid from the stew, besides being used as internal medicine (drunk), used for compresses or others (Adiyasa & Meiyanti, 2021; Sumayyah & Salsabila, 2017). Advanced technology is used by traditional medicine entrepreneurs to meet the increasing needs of the community. Production uses simplisia chopper, simplisia grinding machine, pill machine, tablet machine, capsule filling machine, powder bag filling machine and extraction lat (A. W. Nugroho, 2017; Prita & Widiyawati, 2019). There are even entrepreneurs who produce internal medicine liquid products that have used the Ultra Hight Treatment (UHT) process to strive for the products produced to have the necessary trade sterilization (Rosadi et al., 2023). Standardization of Traditional Medicine To be able to utilize traditional medicine in health services, many things must be considered. One of them that is considered to have a very important role is standardization efforts (Kartika et al., 2017; Pardomuan & Prasetyo, 2024).

It is hoped that with this standardization, not only will the quality of traditional medicine be improved, but more importantly, the emergence of various side effects that are medically irresponsible will be avoided. The definition of standardization is an ideal state or the highest and

perfect level of achievement, which is used as a minimum acceptance limit (Field & Lohr, 1990). The standard shows that the ideal level reached is not arranged too rigidly, but still within the limits that are justified by the name of tolerance. The requirements for a good standard are considered quite important are: (a) Clear means that it can be measured properly, including the size of the deviations that may occur. (b) Reasonable Medical systems in human culture are theoretically divided into modern medical systems and traditional medical systems.

Health is one of the important aspects of human life so that healthy and sick events will affect human life, health becomes a valuable thing so that humans try to solve any problems that attack their lives (Endarti, 2015). permasalahan kesehatan yang merupakan Health problems that are a threat to human life are both simple and complex, unbalanced elements in the human body that cause illness are a simple cause of health problems, while complex ones cannot be determined by one cause alone, humans have a culture so that they can interpret these health problems from various sides of life (Anwar, 2020; Djoht, 2002; Foster & Andreson, 2013; Winkelman, 2008). The concept of health also arises in every human being, either himself as an individual or a group that is often referred to as a community. This concept is different from others, because each human being can express how pain and health are felt and make assumptions about how the disease is (Anwar, 2020; Djoht, 2002; Foster & Andreson, 2013; Winkelman, 2008).

Then in general, each region has its own characteristics, one of which is in the local knowledge system in Biak Numfor district, more precisely in the west biak district of opuri village, one of which is Personalistic Disease Treatment, This treatment in the opuri village community plays an important role in the community because this treatment is one of the cultural heritages passed down from the ancestors in each generation and is still being used today, the treatment of personalistic diseases is one of the traditional treatments of this treatment is also still closely related to the belief in the existence of ancestral spirits that exist in every treatment process carried out by the opuri village community.

### **Application of Biak Traditional Medicine in Opuri Village**

The Biak people in Opuri Village still use traditional medicine because it has become one of the cultures that are deeply embedded in the community, the local knowledge they have is used for traditional medicine for the treatment of personalised diseases that are often used in the community. The reason is because traditional medicine does not contain preservatives, in the village community is more trusted because it is believed to be able to cure the disease suffered.

In the biak community they are still attached to their culture and we can see it in their traditional medicine, namely in the process of healing stomach pain due to *asne byor* (wrong eating) or it can also be used as a traditional medicine ingredient by the biak tribe in Opuri Village, west biak district, biak numfor district. These types are *Zingiber officinale* (ginger), (pear) and *Morinda citrifolia* (noni) or in the local language called Kandarek as traditional medicine ingredients. One of the benefits of *Zingiber officinale* (ginger/pear) is treating stomach pain.

In addition, Zingiber is also often used for flavouring or seasoning dishes so that these plants are usually always available at home. This is related to the location of the community's residence in the highlands which is identical to cold weather so that it makes people easily catch a cold and is also useful as a body warmer and a treatment that is easily developed and efficacious for generations in treating various diseases. There are two types of ginger used: red ginger and white ginger in the treatment process.



Figure 1: Images of white ginger (left) and red ginger (right)

### Traditional treatment process for various diseases.

#### *Asnebyor* (wrong eating)

*Asnebyor* is usually treated with ginger taken from the yard, 2-3 segments are taken and then washed with water, then clenched or rubbed in a mortar until smooth and taken and filled in a dinner plate or stone plate, after all that is done, then the indigenous people who have the advantage in curing this disease begin to massage the sick patient, The first part to be massaged is the front of the abdomen to the spine, then the left and right hands to the fingers, as well as the left and right feet to the fingers, after the massage the indigenous people usually walk to the front door and say some words in the form of *mantra-mantra* (cannot be mentioned) which are believed to be a medium in carrying out treatment. After chanting the words, the patient's illness is generally cured instantly.



Figure 2: Picture of white ginger (pi/esam) and red ginger (esam erik) that have been cleaned.



Figure 3: Picture of red and white ginger (pir erik iso pir epyoper) that has been mashed and ready for medicinal use.

### ***Boryas (jampi-jampi)***

*Boryas (jampi-jampi)* is known in the community as a disease or illness caused by a person's deliberate factor against the patient because *boryas (jampi-jampi)* is usually used to hurt others due to jealousy or anger that is suppressed and not expressed to the intended person because maybe the person is a close family or partly, Most *boryas* are also used to protect themselves and are used when hunting, people who have *boryas* cannot be reprimanded or greeted when they are returning from hunting or returning from looking at the sea because some people still believe that someone who has *boryas* cannot be disturbed because he is guarded by creatures that are not visible, The most common part of the body is the thighs, armpits, upper calves, the initial symptom of pain that is felt is that the area becomes very hot, and starts to swell and turn slightly reddish blue, the way to cure it can use *mengkudu (kandarek)* leaves to stick to the affected area, But before the leaf is attached, it will be held over a waiting fire and there are words (cannot be mentioned) that are said to the leaf, as if he ordered it to leave immediately and restore energy and heal the wound.



Figure 4: Picture of the treatment process in a village that holds *boryas* treatment.

There are also traditional treatments that are not related to personalisation, such as traditional medicine using itchy leaves, which are commonly found in Papua, growing wildly. People use itchy leaves to treat aches and pains throughout the body. Itchy leaves are used by local people in the Papua region for treatment such as relieving body aches. Itchy leaves are used by rubbing itchy leaves directly on parts of the body that feel sore and tired. To relieve dizziness in the head, itchy leaves can be used by wrapping the leaves on the forehead and then can be released if you feel better. Itchy leaves are also commonly used in the process of childbirth as a painkiller for mothers who are about to give birth. This is usually used in the Meyah tribe.

From the above benefits, medically this leaf can indeed overcome these things. Scientifically, plants of the Urticaceae family generally do have chemical content such as monoridin, tryptophan, histidine, alkaloids, flavonoids, formic acid and anthraquinones. Formic acid itself is contained in the glandular "thorns" found on the surface of the leaves. When the thorns hit the body, the glandular ant acid is released and affects the dilation of the body's pores. This dilation of the pores apparently stimulates blood circulation. That is why the use of itchy leaves is commonly used to treat aches and pains or make people feel better. Antibacterial activity, itchy leaves can be developed into a natural food preservative besides for health (Pertiwi & Fernanda, 2019; Simaremare et al., 2017)



Figure 5: Picture Itchy leaves (*kangun*)

### Factors of using traditional medicine

Traditional medicine using itself is strongly influenced by. First, Social Factors The reason people choose traditional medicine is that while experiencing traditional treatment their family can visit and wait at any time. This is in accordance with human nature as a social being who always wants to interact directly with his family or relatives in a state of illness. During their treatment they can communicate intimately with their families. However, there is also information that suggests that they think they prefer to be treated or treated in hospitals rather than being treated or treated in traditional medicine places. They were taken to traditional medicine not of their own accord but because of the cost of treatment. Usually they have never been to a hospital, so they cannot compare traditional treatment with hospital treatment. Here there appears to be a resigned factor due to limited experiences in social interaction.

Second, Economic Factors They stated that the cost was cheaper than hospitals, according to them the method of payment was also not burdensome because patients were not interested in down payments. In addition, those who are unable to pay at once can pay in instalments after they return home. When viewed from the classification of patients who come to this traditional treatment place, most of their jobs are manual labourers, drivers, parking attendants, so it is natural that economic factors determine in choosing a place of treatment.

Third, Cultural Factors One of the reasons why patients choose traditional medicine places is because the treatment in this place has an expert who has supernatural powers that can accelerate the healing of the disease. In addition, this is in accordance with what was stated by Foster and Anderson that the medical system is an integral part of culture. One other factor that causes traditional medicine to still be in demand by the community is the category of healing, namely who has the right or the right to cure, for example for disease C only D has the right, disease A only B has the right to cure. In the perception of the community, it is also considered that diseases that are not severe do not need to be taken to the hospital, because the illness suffered is considered not life-threatening, does not interfere with appetite and is still able to carry out daily activities even though it is somewhat disturbed. This appears to be in accordance with what

Spreadly stated, that culture is knowledge, values used to interpret experience and generate social behaviour. Fourth, Social Factors The comfort obtained during treatment because it does not use equipment that can frighten them, especially fractures do not need to be amputated or cast. Fifth, Convenience Factor Patients can be treated immediately without having to wait for x-rays and other laboratory results.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional Medicine Utilisation In dealing with health problems, especially those that are personalistic and family plays a major role. Knowledge of traditional medicine and the utilisation of medicinal plants are elements of obtaining a healthy life. At the community level, the role of traditional medicine including traditional medicine compounders or herbal medicine has an important role in providing health services to achieve optimal public health status, even though it only uses traditional medicine mechanisms. There are various factors that cause traditional medicine methods to still be used by the community, namely social, economic, cultural, comfort and convenience (access) factors obtained by the community when compared to modern medicine which must go through a process of administrative stages that are more troublesome for the community, especially those in the villages.

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