

# Culture and Health Beliefs



## The Multicultural Advisory Service

by Julie Fraser

From Ayurveda to Zar, in this edition we offer a glimpse into the different health beliefs and traditions across cultures. We are currently working on our 2019 Multicultural Calendar with Culture and Health Beliefs as the theme so watch this space for the release dates on this fascinating month by month journey through culture and health.

It has been a busy period for the team with the delivery of cross cultural training across Queensland, and three successful forums in Cairns (Forever Young), Toowoomba (Diversity in Aged and Community Care), and Logan (Diversity in Aged and Disability Care). All forums received positive feedback with attendees loving the delivery and wanting more. It was a rewarding exercise for both the team and the participants. The team looks forward to the continuation of these valuable forums. Take a look at p3 to read what some of our participants had to say.

We are excited to announce that the [Information Booklet for Multicultural Communities](#) is now available (photo on the lower right hand corner of this page). It contains easy to read information on accessing services for over and under 65. In addition, we are working on Culture and Disability workbook.

Diversicare's Multicultural Advisory Service is funded by the Department of Health and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

## Ayurveda<sup>1</sup> by Annalise Webb

The Sanskrit term *Ayurveda* translates literally as 'the science of life'. More than 5000 years old, it is the oldest, most comprehensive medical system in the world. It originated in India and has been widely practiced around the world.

*Ayurveda* is about maintaining harmony in mind and body using awareness and practices that improve digestion and metabolism (Agni), reducing the accumulation of undigested or poorly digested food toxins in the body (Ama), strengthening the immune system (Ojas) and keeping the mind and body peaceful (Sattva) through mindfulness in order to prevent the development of disease and maintain optimal health. It teaches people to view their bodies as a reflection of nature and how to live in greater harmony with the cycles of the day, year and life.

This ancient knowledge gives people the capacity for more mindful, balanced living, and is also the source of many modern approaches to healthcare.

# Multicultural Advisory Service

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August 2018

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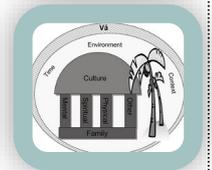
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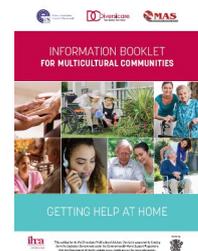
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Upcoming Events

Save these

dates!

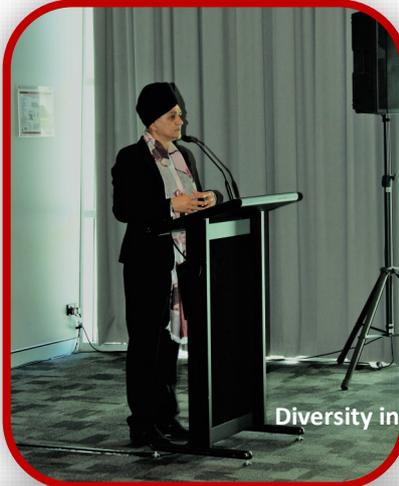
OUT NOW!



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## Culture and Health Beliefs

### Photo Gallery



Diversity in Aged and Disability Care, 17 July 2018 Forum - Logan



Diversity Forum, 31 May 2018 - Cairns



Diversity in Aged and Community Care Forum  
6 June 2018 - Toowoomba



World Day for Cultural Diversity, 22 May 2018 - Townsville

## Traditional Chinese Medicine<sup>2</sup>

by Thana Roysmith

“Health is balance and ill-health is imbalance. This has been the guiding principle in Chinese medicine”. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) originated in ancient China and has evolved over thousands of years. TCM is based on eastern philosophy. Diagnosis and treatment are holistic and form a broader perspective taking into consideration physical, emotional and psychological aspects of a person rather than diagnosis relating to specific parts of the body as in western medicine. TCM practitioners use herbal medicines and various mind and body practices, such as acupuncture, tai chi, the concept ‘Qi (energy)’, 5 elements (earth, fire, water, metal, wood ) theory and Yin-Yang force to prevent and treat

health problems.

“Yin and Yang are two opposing but complementary forces of energy where there is an interplay of constant motion and change. Yin is characterized as slow, soft, yielding, diffuse, cold, wet, and passive; and is associated with water, earth, the moon, femininity, and nighttime. Yang, by contrast, is fast, hard, solid, focused, hot, dry, and active; and is associated with fire, sky, the sun, masculinity and daytime”.

When relating to the human body, when there are diseases and disorders due to chronic conditions, the forces of yin and yang are considered to be imbalanced. Consequently Chinese herbal medicine is prescribed for

treatment towards creating harmony and homeostasis in a person to balance yin and yang. In Australia, Chinese medicine is widely practiced and Practitioners must be registered with the Allied Health Practitioners Regulation Agency.



Symbol of Yin and Yang

## Vietnamese Health Practice: Cao Gio<sup>3</sup>

by Taryn Quach

A common health practice in Vietnam is *Cao gio*, which translated means “rubbing off the bad wind” It is also known as coining or wind scraping. It is the practice of rubbing the skin with some type of heating oil or medicated oil before scraping the area with the side of a coin or sometimes a ceramic spoon or your thumb is used. The coin used is a special coin which can be purchased in Vietnam for the specific purpose of *Cao gio*. It has a smooth edge, not like the currency coins. Currency coins aren’t used as they would cause a lot of pain.



“Apparently my Chi wasn’t up to par.”<sup>4</sup>

For back pain, stomach pain or general illnesses such as colds and flu, the scraping is applied to the back area. For cough or chest pain it is done on the chest and for coughs or nausea, it is applied to the neck.

It is believed that the person has caught “bad winds” and by scraping the skin you are removing the “bad winds” from their body. This practice leaves streaks of red marks and bruising over the areas that have been scraped. However, it is believed the deeper the red colour, the more severe the bad winds the person has caught.

## Testimonials from the Forums

**LOGAN** - “Jade’s presentation [on CALD LGBTIQAP + people] was novel, I learned new information [and] I have a more informed perspective now”

- “I’m really glad to have had this opportunity for professional development. Keep up the great work. Good to remind us of the joy of diversity, as well as the associated problems.”

**CAIRNS** - “Thanks to Diversicare Multicultural Advisory Service (Marcela) for putting this great event every year.”

- “Would recommend the Diversity Forum and cultural training to everyone.”

**TOOWOOMBA** - “Well done Diversicare. A great informative day. Good networking too.”

- “Great day. Pleased I attended.”

## Culture and Health Beliefs

### Sudanese women and "Zar"<sup>5</sup>

by Anyuon Liai

**Z**ar is a ceremony some women practitioners' conduct to pacify "jinn" or evil spirits and cleanse women of afflictions caused by elements of 'jinn'. Some North Sudanese women believe Zar spirits can possess people especially women aged between 35 - 55 years old. Some possession can have long-term effects and can cause mental and physical illnesses.

Beliefs in the jinns and their subdivisions are common throughout many communities in the northern part of the Sudan. It is believed that there are two jinns -- black and white. Black jinns can cause serious illness for which

exorcism may not be effective while white jinns are benign. Similarly, in many North African Muslim countries, illnesses such as depression, infertility and other organic and psychological disorders were widely attributed to possession by hostile spirits. However, the importance of zar ceremonies is not only freeing people possessed, but are also great social occasions for women to communicate as men do within male circles.

Similar to female circumcision, it is believed that zar does not exist in the southern part of the Sudan.

### Pacific Islanders: Health Beliefs<sup>6</sup>

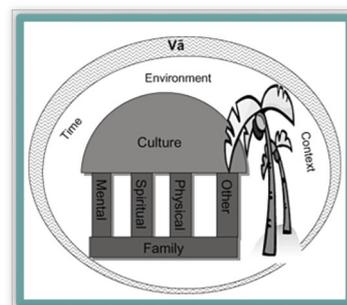
by Marcela Fischer

**P**acific Islanders have a strong tendency to hold on to traditional beliefs and language. Health beliefs vary according to the level of acculturation.

Many Pacific cultures share the belief that illness is the result of an imbalance in the three anchors of the *lokahi* triangle (physical, mental/emotional and spiritual). Healing traditions address all three, and healing occurs in a very holistic way. Traditional healing practices are often the first line treatment option for Pacific people before considering going to the family doctor.

Fuimoano Karl Pulotu-Endemann created the Fonofale model for New Zealand use. This model can help us understand and treat Pacific people in a more holistic, safe and effective manner.

**The Roof** represents cultural values and beliefs that shelter life. **The foundation** is the family. **The Pou** (between the roof and the foundation) are the posts--spiritual, physical, mental and other (gender, sexual orientation, aged, social status).



Fonofale Model for New Zealand  
By Fuimoano Karl Pulotu-Endemann

## References

<sup>1</sup> Dr Pradeep Neupane, Vibrant Ayurveda Earthsong Ayurvedic Clinic

<sup>2</sup> <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/whatiscam/chinesemed.htm>  
<http://btrt.com.au>  
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<sup>3</sup> <http://emedsa.org.au/PsychoSocial/EthnicIssues/Culture/VietnamesePractice.htm>  
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## Culture and Health Quotes

*One of the most effective ways to learn about yourself is taking seriously the cultures of others. It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you.*

Edward T Hall

*The root of all health is in the brain. The trunk of it is in emotion. The branches and leaves are the body. The flower of health blooms when all parts work together.*

Kurdish Saying

*Better ten times ill than one time dead.*

Jewish proverb

## Culture and Health Beliefs

Issue 02 August 2018

### UPCOMING EVENTS AT VARIOUS MAS LOCATIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Mark your Calendar

#### Gold Coast Region

Contact Annalise Webb, 0431 017 943 or  
[mas.goldcoast@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mas.goldcoast@diversicare.com.au)

- **22 August** - International Café Community event, Southport Church of Christ
- **23 August** - Seniors Week My Aged Care and Health Information session, Broadbeach Library Meeting Room A
- **30 August** - Dementia and Culture Session, Robina

#### Logan/West Moreton/Central Qld

Contact Anyuon Liai, 0434 254 812 or  
[mas.westmoreton@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mas.westmoreton@diversicare.com.au)

- **2 August** - Central West Community Options Cultural Awareness training, Winton
- **22 August** - Clubhouse Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence training
- **11 September** - Bolton Clarke Cultural Awareness training, Toowoomba,

#### Brisbane Region

Contact Taryn Quach, 0413 512 967 or  
[mas.brisbanesouth@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mas.brisbanesouth@diversicare.com.au)

- **7 August** - Information session for the Chinese Fraternity-Sunnybank, 9:30-12:30pm
- **18 August** - Stall at Zillmere Seniors Open Day, 10-3pm, Zillmere Community Centre.
- **6 Sept** - Information session for the Taiwanese Community 10:30-12:30pm, Acacia Ridge.
- **4 November** - Information session for the Sikh Community, 2-4pm, Sikh Temple, Logan.

#### Brisbane North/Sunshine Coast/Wide Bay Regions

Contact Thana Roysmith, 0447 721 968 or  
[mas.sunshine@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mas.sunshine@diversicare.com.au)

- **8 August** - Communicating Across Cultures, Volunteering Qld, Gympie.
- **13 August** - Working with Diverse Cultures, TAFE, Nambour
- **4 September** - Communicating Across Cultures, Graceville, Nambour

• **7 September** - Communicating Across Cultures, Graceville, Nambour

• **18 September** - Dementia and Culture, North Lakes, North Brisbane.

#### North Queensland Region

Contact Julie Fraser, 0407 045 203 or  
[j.fraser@diversicare.com.au](mailto:j.fraser@diversicare.com.au); or  
Chrissie Ma-amo, 4723 1470 or  
[mcma-amo@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mcma-amo@diversicare.com.au) or Iris Min He, 0428 332 965 or  
[cald.tsv@diversicare.com.au](mailto:cald.tsv@diversicare.com.au)

- **18 Sept** - Culture and Mental Health, Everglow, Ingham
- **25 Sept** - Culture and Mental Health, Everglow, Townsville
- **27 Sept** - Culture and Mental Health, Everglow, Burdekin

#### Cairns Peninsula Region

Contact Marcela Fischer, 0432 322 154 or  
[mas.peninsula@diversicare.com.au](mailto:mas.peninsula@diversicare.com.au)

- **Every 1st Thursday of the month** - Monthly Seniors Morning Tea and Information Session, 10am to 12pm, Hambleton House Community Centre, Edmonton

### References cont'd from p4

- <sup>4</sup> Image from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gua\\_Sha\\_Message\\_Aftermath.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gua_Sha_Message_Aftermath.jpg)  
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- <sup>5</sup> Boddy, J. 1989, "Wombs and Alien Spirits: women, men and the zar cult in northern Sudan".  
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