



Mesoamerican Healers

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Healing practices in Mesoamerica span a wide range, from traditional folk medicine with roots reaching back into the prehispanic era to westernized biomedicine. These sometimes cooperating, sometimes competing practices have attracted attention from researchers and the public alike, as interest in alternative medicine and holistic healing continues to grow.

Responding to this interest, the essays in this book offer a comprehensive, state-of-the-art survey of Mesoamerican healers and medical practices in Mexico and Guatemala. The first two essays describe the work of prehispanic and colonial healers and show how their roles changed over time. The remaining essays look at contemporary healers, including bonesetters, curers, midwives, nurses, physicians, social workers, and spiritualists. Using a variety of theoretical approaches, the authors examine such topics as the intersection of gender and curing, the recruitment of healers and their training, healers' compensation and workload, types of illnesses treated and recommended treatments, conceptual models used in diagnosis and treatment, and the relationships among healers and between indigenous healers and medical and political authorities.

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