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## IMPACT OF RELIGION ON ACUTE SCHIZOPHRENIA IN IRAQ

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Background: Religion plays an important role in symptoms phenomenology, attribution and management in the Arab culture. Mentally ill patients in the Arab countries tend to pass through different health care providing filters. Traditional healers form part of the informal and sometimes unofficial health care sector.

Aims: Explore the timing of local traditions contacts in regard to diagnosis and treatment, and identify types of local traditions contacts of Iraqi schizophrenic patients.

Methods: Hundred Iraqi acute schizophrenic patients, admitted to Ibn-Rushd psychiatric teaching hospital, Baghdad, Iraq, with informative informant were examined. Information list of 3 parts was prepared: 1<sup>st</sup> part asking about the contact timing with faith healers in regard to diagnosis and treatment; 2<sup>nd</sup> asking about the types of traditional faith healer contacts; 3<sup>rd</sup> was asking about the causes of illness.

Results: 22% have no any contact, 47% contact faith healer before and after, 7%before, 24%after the diagnosis and treatment. Types of traditional faith healer contacts were: Sayed 37%; visiting Emams 54%; jinn dealers 32%; Daraweesh 17%; witchcraft 3%; and reading Holly Quran 9%. Causes of illness were: life stresses 42%; patient himself 25%; poor faith and belief 14%; weak personality 11%; genetic causes 4%; witchcraft 5%; Jinn possession 11%; and wish of God 13%.

Conclusions: This study explores the importance of religious background in the course of diagnosis and treatment of acute schizophrenia. Psycho-education was needed to increase the awareness of publics about faith, beliefs, traditional healers, and mental illness.