

The place that man occupies in nature is a cultural construction, as much as the representation of world, body and health, which are typical of every human society.

Health, as much as illness and as much as the different therapeutic systems adopted, is influenced by the environment in which it developed.

Depending on the different environments where they lived, individuals and populations tried to find the essential elements for their existence and maintenance of well-being.

They include food and substances which prevent or treat diseases, as well as therapeutic strategies that differ in relation to people's culture and social structure, and the climatic, geological, faunistic and phyto-geographic conditions in which they live.

Ethno-medicine studies the preventive and therapeutic medical systems developed by different populations in relation to their 'cultures' and 'environments'. It takes into account both the objective criteria of the Western scientific vision (for instance, conducting laboratory investigations in order to identify the 'active substances' that are contained in medicines produced by the traditional pharmacopoea and different ethnic groups) and the different dimensions of perception, function and symbolic vision of health and illness conditions, as socially and culturally determined

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