
The initial objectives of this study were to elicit the ‘traditional healing beliefs’ of an indigenous community in Costa Rica and their use of medicinal plants as an alternative to the western medical system. The community of Quitirrisí showed no consistency in the use of medicinal plants though attendance of the Health Clinic was regular. Medicinal plants were collected with the help of the main informant Juan Sanchez, informal interviews were performed with community members and participant-observation was employed. The results explore the terminology and assumptions made about traditional and western medicine in order to form a new view of communities that display characteristics of both traditional and western.