

**Images of Health and Illness Behaviour Among The Eggon Of Nasarawa State, Nigeria
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ABSTRACT

The Eggon cultural belief system shapes and defines what constitute health and illness behaviour. These reflected the Eggon collective approach to health and well-being. Three research questions guided the study, with specific objectives which included the following, to: find out the perceived causes of illness; explain how belief system affects when to seek treatment, and discover what the Eggon people of Nasarawa State do when they are ill, with specific reference to culture and tradition. Relevant literatures were reviewed, while the theory of reasoned action and functionalist perspective provided the theoretical frame works for the analysis. The study used the phenomenological research design. The qualitative technique, with in-depth interview (IDI) as instrument for data collection was utilized; both primary and secondary data were used. Gate keepers, the elderly and community leaders were purposively selected to constitute a sample size of 65 interviewees. Sixty five (65) IDIs (5) per Local Government Area were conducted. Data were analyzed and findings revealed that Eggon people's perception of causes of illness, when to seek treatment and what they do when they are ill are defined by their lived world, as a people's action and world view is a product of their belief system and practices. The study recommends, among other areas that reform strategies and interventions should be introduced at Local, State and Federal Government levels to address aspects of culture that are detrimental to health and well-being.

Key Words: Eggon Culture, Mental Pictures, Physical Pictures, Health, Illness-Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eggon people have a holistic view of health and illness. They perceive health and illness behaviour from the cultural, traditional, spiritual, psychological, social and physical perspectives. Images that explain health and illness among the Eggon people are linked to their cultural and traditional belief system. There are numerous components that affect their world view, steaming from their behavioural patterns and cognitive responses and experiences in past episodes, which have significantly reoccurred up until date. The institution of the family, relatives, friends and community serve as significant others and played important roles in supporting individuals during the period of illness. Health is perceived to have cultural, traditional, preternatural, natural and supernatural causes and consequences. The mental, social and physical pictures of health and illness among the Eggon is tied to and a reflection of their culture and tradition, and defined images of sacred and profane, which affects their thoughts, mental pictures, social and physical relationships, and creates a world view for them. There are numerous components that affect their world view, steaming from their behavioural patterns and cognitive responses and experiences in past episodes, which have significantly reoccurred up until date. Health is a vital aspect of the development of society. This research is important because it provides information on the images of health and illness among the Eggon people, which is lacking in most literature. It provides written information which can be used by government for a coherent welfare policy that will enhance the health of society. The empirical stand of this research and its findings helps in policy inputs.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1948) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. That health is a complete state of physical, social and mental wellbeing explains why an individual must have a holistic view of health, even in terms of healthy relationships; in which a people's health and illness behaviour cannot be explained without reference to their culture and tradition. According to Enna (2011), the Eggon are geographically located in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, found in some border settlements in Kaduna, the Federal Capital Territory, Plateau and Benue States, they are primarily in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The Eggon's paramount traditional ruler, Aren Eggon, is institutionally located (palace) at Nassarawa Eggon, headquarters of Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area. Eggon, which also refers to the language spoken by the Eggon, falls into the Benue-Congo group of languages (Enna, 2011). Before the advent of colonial rule, the Eggon operated a form of governance that had no central ruler, which qualified it for the controversial status of a stateless society (Kigbu, 1984, cited in Enna, 2011). However, there is a dearth of literature, about Images of Health and Illness Behaviour among the Eggon of Nasarawa State, thus, the relevance of this study.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Belief system and tradition are tied to individual and group response to health and illness. They also influence illness behaviour and determine the actions people take when ill. However, some of the belief systems and cultural practices are detrimental to health. There are a lot of traditional practices that affect Eggon people's health either negatively or positively. If a woman has extra-marital affairs, she will undergo prolonged labour without being able to give birth, until she confesses her sin of immorality to her husband, and gives a chicken to her husband, before she will be able to give birth. If she refuses to confess, she will die or she and the baby will die (Bage-John, 2023). According to Akika (2016), a woman who has committed adultery is expected to confess before giving birth. The belief is that she would have a stillbirth if she does not confess. The *Adan Ashim* (Chief Priest) is called and he conducts the prayers and sacrifice, and the woman thereafter delivers safely (Akika, 2016 p.

34). Cultural believes and traditional practices communicate and create mental pictures of people's culture.

When a woman gives birth, it is believed that she is unclean, and so she is not allowed to cook for her husband. Her husband cannot eat whatever is cooked by a woman who has given birth, until the flow of blood ceases. Purification is carried out by the family or clan Priest. When a woman is experiencing her menstrual cycle, she is not to enter the kitchen, to cook or serve her husband. The other wives, with the support of the relatives, do the chores and cooking. Sexual relations are forbidden when a woman is on her period. It is believed that she is unclean. Puberty rites of passage such as immorality as and when she is still single must be confessed before she gets married (Bage-John, 2023); else there will be serious misfortunes. These are some of the negative effects of culture of health.

Breastfeeding served as a natural contraceptive to determine child birth spacing. In those days, herbs were used for treatment and grandparents and elders knew how to handle certain ailments, including herbs that could aid child birth. Now, modern facilities are available but may not assessable for all; however some men still prefer their wives to use traditional treatment, while others use modern facilities. Women still go to farm at an advanced stage of pregnancies. There have been cases of women giving birth on the farm. Such a child may be named 'Agbie', which means farm, or 'Egga', which means 'road', in a case where the woman gave birth on her way to farm. The feminine version of the name is 'Ashe-Egg' (Bage-John, 2023). Names given to people connote mental images of situations, misfortunes, places and events, which has significant meanings.

There is a myth in Eggon land that women should not eat certain types of animal, else they will give birth to children that resembles such animals. For example, women are not to eat python; else it affects their child bearing. However, women can cook python and some meals for sacrifice (*atseme*) but do not partake in eating it. If she tastes the meal without permission from her husband, a lot of misfortune will follow her. She will start having bad dreams and she will give birth to a child that has the kind of design that appears on the python's skin and will have to sacrifice a chicken to appease the gods. This has religious implications. The woman is, however, forbidden from eating it (the chicken sacrifice). These psychological weapons have helped women to respect their husbands by creating fear in their minds (Bage-John, 2023). These unveils mental pictures of value, reference and respect.

Women are also not allowed to eat alligator and gizzard. It is reserved for the man as a sign of respect. This aspect of the culture is consciously still practiced today, even in urban areas. The gizzard is a special part of a chicken, but to show men's superiority over women, it is reserved for men. A woman who slaughters a chicken and eats the gizzard is perceived as a stubborn woman who does not respect tradition and does not honour her husband. In some cases, a woman who fails to serve her husband the gizzard is mandated to bring a chicken in order to recover the gizzard. She is to buy the chicken with her money or she is fined, in order to serve as a deterrent to others (Bage-John, 2023). These paint images of superiority and inferiority and lack of fairness, which has serious health implications.

The typical Eggon woman plays the role of childbearing and rearing, supports her husband, especially on farm and in doing domestic chores. Going to farm is compulsory, even when the woman is in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Some men are not sensitive; they engage their wives in heavy and tedious farm work. However, Eggon women are believed to be naturally very strong. Some women have given birth on farm lands as a result. A woman who complains or gives excuses about going to farm is seen as a lazy woman.

However, many have given birth safely like that. Also, there are men that, even with technological advancement in the area of health, hold tightly to the belief that allows them to only seek traditional treatment. So they deny their spouses the permission to go to a medical health facility. Their women keep taking some herbal cocktail which, in some cases, causes problems for them (Bage-John, 2023). Excuses therefore paint mental pictures of laziness, which is against cultural norms and values.

Women do not touch food meant for the public when they are observing their period. She is not expected to cook for her husband. Also, the husband is not expected to have sexual intercourse with his wife while she is observing her period. It is considered a taboo. As regards puberty, there are rites of passage, for example female circumcision, commonly known as female genital mutilation (FGM). This is done to prevent promiscuity when a lady has reached puberty stage (between the age of 10 and 14 years). This practice has been eroded as a result of enlightenment, education and some women liberation programmes. However, there are few people that still hold on to this practice. In case a man has just one wife, when she delivers or is undergoing her period, other relatives can step in to help her with the chores. The Eggon traditional society is regarded as a complete society. The perception of family goes beyond the nuclear picture of it (Bage-John, 2023). This unveils images and notions of what is culturally accepted and what is forbidden. A woman who has just given birth is called '*Ashe-tambele*'. She is regarded as unclean for a while, until after some time. The man is not also expected to have sex with his wife within that period. Such issues are not openly discussed. The practice is called '*Tambala*' (where nobody eats the woman's food because she has just delivered of a baby and is considered unclean until the flow of blood ceases). Within that period, the wife can only cook for herself if she wants, but ideally, she is not to do anything. Instead, she is given special attention. Special food is given to her, e.g. white bene-seed soup (*ineq akzu*) is a special delicacy served with '*tuwon shinkafa*' (*ahen sakakpa*). This is because she needs to recover from the blood she lost as a result of child birth and also for the nourishment of the baby.

In addition, she is given a lot of white bene-seed, oil and fish to enrich her meals as well as swallow (*tuwo*) with maize flour (*ahen ogulu*) and ponded yam (*otsokura*). The '*Tambala*' can last for a period of two months or more (Bage-John, 2023). Food and types of food eaten at a specified period of time, also unveils images of health among the Eggon people. Women do not have the right to decide the number of children they want to have. In cases where the woman has health issues that will not allow her have many children and the husband is not properly informed, it turns out to be a serious challenge. The man may even be pushed to marry another wife. But if the man is properly informed about the risk, he may consider. In some cases where the man is mounting pressure when the wife's health is at risk, the relations can intervene in the situation (Bage-John, 2023). What then are the perceived causes of illness?

According to Akika (2016), community cleansing is also done by the chief priest. A young chicken of a few days old is tied by the leg with a long rope and dragged on the ground by a nephew of the family through the village to a distant place until it is dead and the dead body of the chicken is thrown away far from the village. The nephew will not return to the village that same day. He may come back to the village the following day or next, but not on the same day. He will not look back when he is dragging the chicken on the ground. The act of dragging the chicken on the ground and throwing it away signifies that the village is cleansed of all sins, and that any bad thing has been cleansed from the village and thrown away. The third leg is the spraying of 'sanctified water' throughout the village by the chief priest to sanctify the land (Akika, 2016 p 33-34). How do such belief systems affect when to seek treatment?

Virginity plays a significant role in Eggon culture. It accords a woman high respect. After marriage, the white cloth test tells whether the lady was a virgin or not if it is stained. So, if a lady gets married, she is provided with a white cloth for her first sexual intercourse with her husband. If it is stained, the cloth is brought out to show evidence and the lady is celebrated. She is seen as a disciplined lady who kept herself pure before marriage. If she was immoral before getting married, she is asked to provide a chicken in some cases for a cleansing ritual. Females who were deflowered before marriage are treated with second hand value. For example, the man may not pay the required amount or follow all steps/processes required for marriage. If a lady, before marriage, is not a virgin but claims to be one, it is a serious offense.

The girl is returned to her parents' house. The marriage will not hold, because it was actually based on falsehood. The lady in question loses trust (fidelity) and is likely not to marry. Most of these practices have, however, been eroded by civilization and westernization. The parents of a female child that has kept herself as a virgin until marriage are highly celebrated and respected in the cultural setting. Parents give their daughters who are virgins till marriage a gift of chicken, to indicate how happy they are. To reduce promiscuity, an act known as female circumcision (female genital mutilation) is done. It is mostly done on Sundays to ladies that are at puberty stage, who have been reported to have tendencies of becoming promiscuous. A lady who is about to be circumcised is not told. When she goes to take her bath, two energetic women will wait for her, when she is on her way out, they grab her and use a sharp blade to cut her clitoris, after which they rub 'sabulun solo' (black soap) on the wound and then the lady is kept on a mat with her legs open. It causes bleeding and serious pains. It is an unhealthy act that affects women's reproductive health (Bage-John, 2023). It is usually done to reduce promiscuity, and has serious health implications for its victim. So, what do the Eggon people of Nasarawa State do when they are ill, with specific reference to culture and tradition?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the perceived causes of illness among the Eggon people of Nasarawa State.
2. Explain how belief system affects when to seek treatment among the Eggon people of Nasarawa state.
3. Discover what the Eggon people of Nasarawa State do when they are ill, with specific reference to culture and tradition.

1.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

1.4.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was first developed in the late 1960s by Martin Fishbein and revised and expanded by Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) in the decades that followed. It is a theory that focuses on a person's *intention* to behave in a certain way. The aim of the TRA is to explain volitional behaviours. Its explanatory scope excludes a wide range of behaviours such as those that are spontaneous, impulsive, habitual, the result of cravings or simply scripted or mindless (Bentler & Specter, 1970; Langer, 1989). The theory assumed that individuals are usually quite rational and make systematic use of information available to them. "People consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980:5). After reviewing all the studies, they developed a theory that could predict and understand behaviour and attitudes. Their framework, which has become known as the Theory of Reasoned Action, looks at behavioural intentions rather than attitudes as the main

predictors of behaviours. As the Theory of Reasoned Action began to take hold in Social Sciences, Ajzen and other researchers realized that this theory was not adequate and had several limitations (Godin & Kok, 1996). One of the greatest limitations was with people who have little (or feel they have little) power over their behaviours and attitudes. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) questions the mental pictures people have of their state of wellbeing and reasons behind behaviour, especially when ill. To further buttress the point is a supporting theory.

1.4.2 Functionalist Perspective

Functionalism is a sociological theory that uses organic analogy to explain social phenomenon. This theory sees the society as a whole that is made up of parts. The parts are stable, independent but integrated, the parts have functions to play and they do so for the continuity of the whole, and that there is consensus of values. Like a living organism which is made up of a heart, lungs, liver, etc. the society is made up of social institutions like the family, economy, education, religion, law and order, and politics. These social institutions are the stable structures of the society; they are well integrated with one another and there is consensus of values among the various institutions and with each performing its function for the continuity of the society. As an integrated system, anytime there is disequilibrium, a homeostatic process is set in motion which would return the society to stability. From the viewpoint of the functionalists, if we want to study the social world we should look at latent and manifest functions, the intended and unintended consequences of social behaviour. Functionalists believe that the social world (including all social institutions) is out there like natural objects and could be studied with results known (Idyorough, 2002). The images of health and illness behaviour play functions between and among the Eggon people, for the continuity of the whole ethnic group, bringing about agreement and continuity of the Eggon society and culture.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This study used the phenomenological research design. This research design was chosen because the researcher is interested in understanding the lived experiences of a group of people. The qualitative technique, with in-depth interview (IDI) as instrument for data collection was utilized, so as to know the meanings and interpretations people give to concepts and situations based on their personal experiences; both primary and secondary data were used. Gate keepers, the elderly and community leaders were purposively selected to constitute a sample size of 65 interviewees. Sixty five (65) IDIs (5) per Local Government Area were conducted. The purpose of the FGDs and IDIs was to gain first-hand knowledge on images of health and illness behaviour, by exploring the depth and nuances of participant's opinions.

Nasarawa State is located in [central Nigeria](#); it was created out of Plateau State on 1st October, 1996, by the Military government of General Sani Abacha. It is bounded in the north by [Kaduna State](#), in the west by the [Federal Capital Territory](#) (Abuja), in the south by [Kogi](#) and [Benue States](#) and in the east by [Taraba](#) and [Plateau States](#). The state has 13 Local Government Areas and these are: Awe, Akwanga, Doma, Karu, Keana, Keffi, Kokona, Lafia, Nasarawa, Nassarawa Eggon, Obi, Toto, and Wamba (nasarawastate.com.ng/29/10/2013).

As at the 2006 population census, Nasarawa State had a total population of 1,869,377 inhabitants (943,801 males and 925,576 females). The population projection of the 13 LGAs in Nasarawa as at 2025 is 3.1 million, with an annual population change of 2.8%. As the largest ethnic nationality in Nasarawa State, they are spread in all the thirteen Local

Government Areas, but with larger concentrations in Nassarawa Eggon, Lafia, Akwanga, Doma, Keffi and Kokona. The main villages of the Eggon people are Nassarawa-Eggon, Kagbu, Washo and Wana. Eggon is divided into 25 dialects, some of which are; Eggon Wangibi, Ikka, Wana, Washo, Wakama, Ogne, Angbashu, Alushi, Alogani, Eva, Nabe, Lizzi, Arikpa, etc (Sibomana, 1985 cited in Enna 2011). Eggon people are predominantly found in Nassarawa Eggon, Lafia and Kokona LGAs.

A tape recorder was used, with the consent of the participants, to record the data. According to Erinosh (2002, cited in Olaku, 2016), the analysis of data from in-depth interviews demands personal intuition, imagination and internal logic guided by the cultural and behavioural context of the community or phenomenon being studied. The data were first transcribed by transferring the respondents' opinion to paper for analysis. The context and meaning of the situation as well as non-verbal cues were noted. Major concepts related to the topic were identified; data were coded by grouping them into the identified categories. The data were then presented. Ethical clearance was gotten from the Ethical Committee of the Ministry of Health, Nasarawa State. Contacts were made with community leaders before embarking on the research. At the field work stage, the researcher and research assistants familiarized themselves with the research environment and gate keepers, then explained intentions and gained access.

1.6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.6.1 Perceived Causes of Illness among the Eggon of Nasarawa State

The interviewees explained the causes of illness among the Eggon as follows:

- a typical village Eggon person has a mindset that evil spirits are responsible for any form of misfortune. One's enemies can also invoke evil spirits to cause illness. One's enemies can also send evil spirits to attack people, out of envy or hatred for no justifiable reason (Male interviewee, 72 years old).
- a curse on a particular person or community can bring about illness, through ancestors or gods" (Male interviewee, 79 years old)
- disobedience to gods or affliction by enemies can cause illness in Eggon land" (Male interviewee, 65 years old).
- deviation from societal norms or culture causes illness" (Male interviewee, 65 years old).
- evil actions like, adultery, fornication, stealing...brings curses that may result in illness" (Female interviewee, 68 years old).
- behaviours that ancestral gods forbids can bring illness upon people. Example, when a woman is married, she is forbidden to have extra marital affairs. If she does a curse will follow her. It could be affliction of a particular disease by the gods. Or during child birth, she could be having prolonged labor, except she confesses, else she dies" (Male interviewee, 78 years old).

Once a person has a mindset on the cause of his misfortune, it becomes difficult for such person's to get healed using orthodox medicine. However, this is unique to mostly illiterate persons in Eggon land. Also, Christians are encouraged to discard the belief system based on emotions. Among the civilized and Christians, efforts are made to seek for orthodox medicine. Also among Eggon Christians, efforts are made to seek for God's divine healing. Conversely, people seek for traditional/ native healing method and some mix both. A number of unbelievers will even go to soothsayers to fish out the persons responsible for one's ill health. However, even among those who profess to be Christians, secretly go to native doctors for healing.

1.6.2 How Belief System Affects When to Seek Treatment among the Eggon of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

From the results of the interview on how belief system affects when to seek treatment among the Eggon, the following was discovered:

-.....when the cause finding of the illness has been completed” (Male interviewee, 56 years old).

In finding treatment, the person involved has some questions to answer. If questioned and the person confesses, they can now seek solution for treatment.

1.6.3 What the Eggon People of Nasarawa State do when they are Ill, with specific reference to Culture and Tradition

The Eggon people have a rich cultural heritage which has been affected to a large extent by modernization, civilization and religion. However, the following findings were documented as regards what they do when they are ill:

If the person confesses, it enables them to know the nature of treatment to proffer. The nature and root cause of illness determines the direction of treatment. If spiritual, it takes that dimension. If physical, it takes physical direction (Male interviewee, 69 years old).

Believe system, culture and tradition are inherent in the practitioners, so they consciously and unconsciously practice it. There are also other notions of the clean and the unclean in Eggon culture. Incest is regarded as a serious taboo. For example, if a girl has sexual intercourse with her brother, certain rituals must be performed, or it can lead to the death of some family members. If one of the persons involved in the act of the incest happens to have a snake bite and the other person involved comes to visit, the one who had the snake bite would not survive it (This means it renders the people involved in the act vulnerable to misfortunes).

If a lady that has not married has sex with a married man, and she happens to come in contact with the *Ashum* (which is the masquerade and *ari-aba-ashum* - a man who is involved in masquerade activities), she will not conceive again in her matrimonial home. The *ashum* is made up of dead people that are believed to be communicating or having union with people living, serving as checks on people). A ritual is usually performed to cleanse the woman before she can conceive. This can only be achieved after she must have confessed. When the *Ashum* dies, nobody is to cry, until after members of his group certify him dead and have performed the rituals. Then the group members cry out first; only then can others join them in crying. The corpse is buried only by members of the group (people who practice it or worship it). Women are not allowed to witness the burial or rituals. Also, if a woman happens to be the first to cry at the demise of the *Ashum*, she will not be able to conceive again. Also, when a ritualist dies, they usually invoke a masquerade. If a woman comes in contact with the masquerade, she will develop reproductive health problems, one of which is that she will not bear children again. This is in agreement with Anzaku et al, (1996) who said that “Women are forbidden from close interaction with the masquerades for it is believed that touching masquerades could make women barren”. (pg58). The social implications are that it keeps women in check... probates the patrilineality of the society” (pg. 55). An immediate repercussion of coming in contact with the masquerade is that the woman will not grow again (it is called '*binjugu*').

Also, if two brothers have sex with one woman, it is regarded as a very destructive health taboo, called '*Adagaha*.' once one of the brothers falls ill and the other visits, the sick

brother will die. (The implication here is that the two brothers sharing the same woman are unclean, so the visit of an unclean well man to an unclean sick man will lead to the death of the unclean sick man). Also, if one of the victims is beaten by a snake, he will not survive because he has involved himself in an abominable act and has not been cleansed. The happenings surrounding the foundation of *Omba-tse* is that it is founded on cleanness (Purity); in other words, trying to go back to practice the real Eggon culture, which has partly been eroded by civilization. If you are unclean, you cannot go to war and come back alive. 'Unclean' here refers to adultery, fornication, etc.

If sexual intercourse takes place between siblings (brother and sister from the same family), it is called '*Eshru*' (incest). One repercussion of this act is that if a cleansing ritual is not performed, when the lady gets married, she will conceive and give birth to children, but they will never survive. The cleansing ritual is performed by calling family members together. The masquerade (*Ashimu*) does that by making a loud noise, signifying danger and mockery. The cleansing ritual is performed by the priest who usually lives in a mud house with thatched roof. He leaves his house very early in the morning, no one must see him. He goes to a distant place with the woman who is suffering the repercussion of the taboo (e.g. one that has been giving birth to children and they have been dying) and the man that was involved in the act with her. The woman goes along with a broom stick that has never been used, a chick that has been hatched newly (a day old chick) and a dog (preferably a black dog). With those items they go to the hills. The chick is killed by the priest and given to the woman and man that committed the '*Eshru*' (incest taboo) to eat raw, signifying that 'they have committed a forbidden act, which is disgusting, so they should eat a disgusting thing.' It is, however, important to note that the cleansing ritual slightly varies from clan to clan. Worthy of note is the fact that civilization, socialization and religion have changed or modified most of these practices.

The traditions, which are age-long practices and belief system of the Eggon people shape and affect their perceptions on perceived causes of illness; when to seek treatment, and define what they do when they are ill. Visual representations of well-being, wellness, or healthy living are tied to key factors of religion, culture and tradition. They perceive health and illness behaviour from the spiritual, psychological, social and physical perspectives. Images that explain health and illness among the Eggon people are linked to their cultural and traditional belief system. There are numerous components that affect their world view, steaming from their behavioural patterns and cognitive responses and experiences in past episodes, which have significantly reoccurred up until date. Health is perceived to have cultural, traditional, preternatural, natural and supernatural causes and consequences. The Eggon cultural belief system shapes and defines what constitute health and illness behaviour. The institution of the family, relatives, friends and community serves as significant others and played important roles in supporting individuals during the period of illness. These reflected the Eggon collective approach to health and well-being. The institution of the family, relatives, friends and community serves as significant others and played important roles in supporting individuals during the period of illness. These reflected the Eggon collective approach to health and well-being.

1.7 CONCLUSION

Eggon people's perception of causes of illness, when to seek treatment and what they do when they are ill are defined by their lived world, as a people's action and world view is a product of their belief system and practices. It affects only those who belief in it because civilization and religion has affected some aspects of the Eggon cultural belief system.

1.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

- i. Reform strategies and interventions should be introduced at Local, State and Federal Government levels to address aspects of culture that are detrimental to health and well-being.
- ii. Multi-dimensional approach toward finding out causes of illnesses should be encouraged, for a more effective health intervention strategy.
- iii. Total reliance on culture and tradition as regards what they do when people are ill should be discouraged by community leaders through enlightenment programs.

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