

24 **1. Introduction**

25 Indigenous culture is an integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes the language,
26 thoughts, actions, medication, customs, beliefs and institutions of racial, ethnic, social, or
27 religious groups (California Endowment, 2003). This definition denotes that indigenous culture
28 is intricately intertwined with every aspect of the entire human life within every group of
29 persons. Twumasi and Bonsi (1957) argued that medical systems have ties with the way of life of
30 a people and that the institution of diagnosing has ties with philosophy, religion and belief
31 systems.

32 Detecting the root cause of ailments in traditional medication entails a systematic quest for
33 answers to the origins of a particular disease to determine, who or what caused it and why it has
34 affected a particular person at a particular time (Mahame, Busia, Kasilo & Mhame, 2010). This
35 is a key part of African traditional medication. According to Yawar (2001), human beings can be
36 regarded as having two realms of existence, which may conveniently be labelled inner (spiritual)
37 and outer (physical). These traditional healers (the diviners) are able to address both the physical
38 and the spiritual aspects of the patient while orthodox practitioners address or concentrate only
39 the naturalistic aspect. Similarly, Abdullahi (2011) affirms that diagnosing to identify the cause
40 of disease among traditional Africans is reached through spiritual means. The idea behind the use
41 of divination to find the root cause of diseases emanates from the practitioners philosophy that
42 infirmities are not seen as chance occurrences but are believed to arise from the actions of
43 individuals and ancestral spirits according to the imbalance between the individual and the social
44 environment (Anyinam, 1987; Hedberg, Madati, Mshigeni, Mshiu & Samuelson, 1982;
45 Ngubane, 1987; Staugard, 1985; WHO, 1976). With similar argument, UNESCO (2013) states
46 that traditional means of diagnosing diseases are very effective and they based on theories that

47 see human beings as inseparable from their social, natural, spiritual and cosmic environment.
48 With this holistic approach, disease is considered and diagnose as a phenomenon that arises
49 when an imbalance affects the vital powers governing the patient's health; these powers range
50 from the most powerful deity to the smallest living organism. Buor (2002) suggests that the
51 fundamental theory in traditional medicine is that, there is a triune nature of man, that is,
52 physical, mental and spiritual and the diagnosis and therapeutic approaches should be buttressed
53 on that basis. May and Mead (1999) state that recognizing a patient's spiritual concerns is viewed
54 as an essential part of the patient-centered medicine increasingly seen as crucial to high-quality
55 patient care. For this reason, the traditional healers delve much into the entire system of the client
56 holistically to scrutinize him or her.

57 The traditional healers are able to reveal hidden things which the spectacles of orthodox
58 practitioners cannot see. A perusal made by Yawar (2001) on the standard general medical
59 textbooks similarly affirms that spirituality is not considered in medical teaching. D'Souza
60 (2007) also added that in academia, little attention has been paid to spirituality. In view of this,
61 most medical doctors do not regard spiritual issues as very important in their practice. Yawar
62 (2001) further established that medical trained doctors cannot claim special knowledge or insight
63 into the spiritual condition of patients as in the case of traditional healers. Educating medical
64 personnel on how to deal with the spiritual or personalistic aspects of medical care is not a
65 typical part of medical school or college curricula, yet evidence is emerging that it is something
66 patients want and expect medical personnel to do as part of the care they provide (D'Souza,
67 2002, Mathai & North, 2013 and Beer, 2000). The World Health Organisation (2000) reports that
68 in the United Kingdom (UK) almost 40% of the physicians make some referrals to alternative

69 medication. It is for these reasons why the World Health Organisation encourages African
70 member states to uphold and incorporate traditional medication in their health care system.
71 Accordingly, most people including doctors, health practitioners and Christians, in most cases,
72 continue to shun the effective indigenous ways of identifying the causes of ailment despite their
73 contribution to providing the health needs of the population (Conserve Africa, 2002). It is
74 important therefore to make the indigenous cultural ways of diagnosing diseases known through
75 this study in order to remove the mystery and superstition associated to them. This paper
76 concentrates on the diagnostic practices of the traditional diviners (Priests and Priestesses) and
77 spiritual healers in the Ashanti region, Ghana. Information provided in this paper were obtained
78 through primary data and other relevant published papers and books. Researching into this area
79 of study will help serve as a wakeup call to the general public to further embrace the effective
80 indigenous cultural ways of identifying the cause of diseases and to shun the negative attitudes
81 towards the traditional methods of diagnoses. This will go a long way to attract the necessary
82 attention of traditional cultural ways of unearthing the cause of ailments.

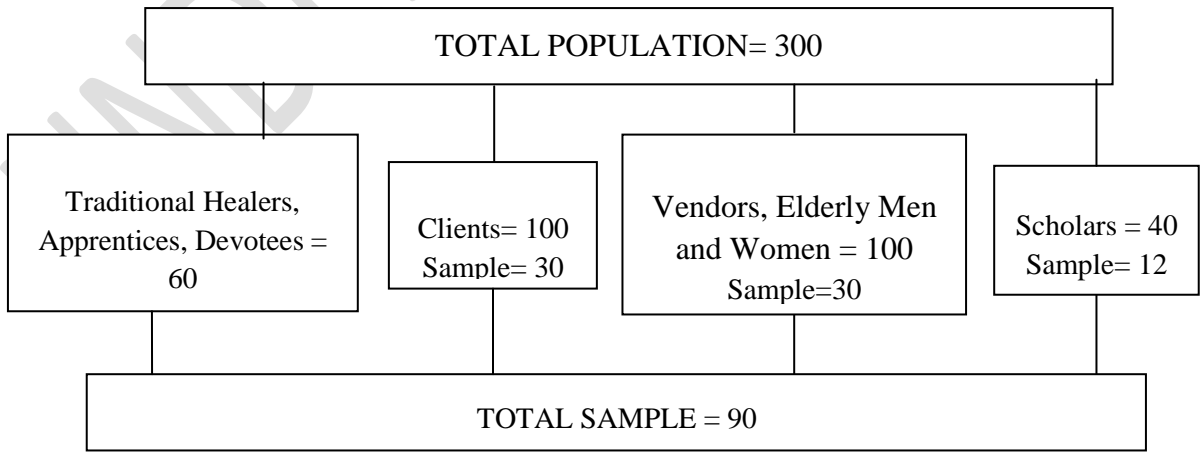
83 **2. Methods**

84 Specifically, the studies were conducted in four Traditional Medical Centres in the Ashanti
85 Region of Ghana. They are the *Bongari Shrine at Adumakasekese*, *Asuo Abresua Shrine of*
86 *Ahwirewam*, *Bokankye Akua Gyabon Shrine* (currently situated at Mankranso Peposo), and
87 *Apomasu Kwao Shrine of Ntensere*. These medical centres were purposively selected because
88 they have successfully been practicing the indigenous cultural ways of diagnosing diseases.

89 The study was driven by the qualitative research method. According to Leedy and Ormrod
90 (2005), qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of

91 phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the
92 participants' point of view. This research approach was used to solicit insiders' perspectives in
93 order to identify and describe the indigenous cultural ways of detecting the various causes of
94 diseases as well as its relevance for the development of the nation. The research methods
95 employed in successful accomplishment of this study were descriptive study, case study and
96 phenomenological study which are under the qualitative approach. Interviews and observation
97 were the main instruments designed and used by the researcher to solicit data from respondents
98 on their opinions relating to the major concerns of the study. In-depth interviews were
99 extensively used to allow the researcher to understand deeper with the participant, and gain more
100 extra knowledge and insight about the traditional modes of identifying diseases. The observation
101 also gave the researcher the chance to collect live information from live situations.

102 The population for the study was made up of traditional healers (traditional priests and
103 priestesses), elderly persons, patients and devotees of the selected centres. The populace was first
104 selected purposively and then quota sampling technique was employed to categorise them into
105 four homogeneous groups because of the heterogeneous nature of the population. In all, a total
106 sample of forty-two (90) respondents was engaged in the study. The sampling design is shown in
107 Figure 1.



116

117 Fig. 1: Sampling Design

118 Source: Researcher's Construct from Sample Survey 2018

119 The sample percentage is in line with Busha's and Harter's (1980) contention that for a quality
120 research, thirty percent (30%) of the total respondents are accepted. Similarly, the rule of thumb
121 sample size selection also states that a researcher carrying out a qualitative study must select
122 30% of a population of less than thousand (Puopiel 2014).

123

124 **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

125 **4.1 Diagnoses of Ailments in Traditional Medication in Ashanti Region**

126 Among the traditional medicine practitioners in the Ashanti region, the ability to diagnose illness
127 is considered as a gift from God the Supreme Being. The study revealed that ancestors, dwarfs,
128 gods and other spirits who are believed to be the messengers of God can also invest powers into
129 man or manifest through man to diagnose all kinds of diseases.

130 In diagnosing, a major emphasis is placed on determining the cause underlying the illness. The
131 study brought to light two main ways of diagnosing in traditional medicine administration. In
132 affirming this, Dime (1995) strongly argues that the diagnosis of diseases in an African
133 traditional healing system is a two-fold event. They are the physical and the spiritual. In relation
134 to this finding, Hewson (1998) also noted a passionate ambivalence towards the two main forms
135 of diagnosis. According to him, illness may be caused by physical and/or spiritual factors that
136 relate to African cosmology and thus, threatens the health of individuals. This study is based on
137 the spiritual ways of identifying diseases, since the diviners and other spiritual healers
138 incorporate the physical ways of identifying diseases in their diagnostic processes.

139 **4.2 Spiritual Diagnoses in Traditional Medication**

140 Spiritual diagnoses is the consultation of the 'spirit world' to find the root cause of disease and
141 also to discern whether there is infringement of an established order from the part of the sick
142 person. According to Agbor and Naidoo (2011), the spiritual healers usually consult spirits for
143 diagnosing diseases, their causes and treatments especially when an illness fails to respond to
144 treatment, whether home remedies or western medication. From the foregoing, the traditional
145 healers strongly base their healing method on the personality disease theory which addresses the
146 physical and the spiritual aspect of mankind. They believe that man does not wrestle against
147 flesh and blood but against other unseen spirits and for this reason, man needs diviners to reveal
148 to them the unseen problems.

149 The participants repeatedly reported that they strongly believe that certain diseases have spiritual
150 connections and these diseases are the main reason for seeking spiritual medical care. Diseases
151 that have spiritual underpinnings can only be diagnosed and treated or reversed by spiritual
152 means. This is related to Newton's third law of motion which states that action and reaction are
153 equal and opposite. That is personalistic diseases must be treated by spiritual means while
154 naturalistic diseases must be treated by natural means. It can be observed that this law is
155 conveniently practical in diagnosing and treating health problems in traditional African societies.

156 The study brought to light that in spiritual diagnoses, maturity on the part of the practitioner is
157 very significant in order to prevent misuse of some mystical powers. The respondents stated that
158 as diviners, they are able to hear, understand, interpret and respond to voices and images of the
159 supernatural beings. In a related argument, Agbor et al. (2011) and Truter (2007) contended that
160 diviners are believed to have extra-sensory perception and can see beyond the ordinary.

161 In spiritual diagnosing, ancestors, dwarfs, gods and other spirits who are strongly believed to be
162 the intermediaries between man and the Supreme God are consulted about the cause of a

163 patient's illness or problems. If favoured responses are granted to the practitioner, the cause of
164 the disease is revealed and the possible remedies are shown by the spirits. The purpose of the
165 consultation is to seek the express permission from the ancestors, dwarfs, gods and other spirits
166 to treat the case.

167 The study unveiled that both methods of diagnosing (spiritual and physical) diseases and other
168 problems are used integrally and interchangeably by some traditional healers depending on the
169 problem at hand. In order to achieve total balance in the patient's life, the healers embrace the
170 two methods (spiritual and physical) of diagnosing ailment and other cases. Below are the modes
171 of diagnosing diseases that came out of the study:

172 **4.2.1 Casting of Cowries**

173 Casting of cowries is another medium of diagnosing diseases and other problems among some
174 traditional healers in Ashanti Region. It was explained that before throwing the cowries, special
175 incantations are invoked in order to salute and invite the spirits in charge. The study revealed that
176 the number of cowries used depends on the instructions given by the dwarfs and the other spirits
177 in control. Sometimes shells, money, seeds, dice, and other objects that have been appointed by
178 the spirits to represent certain spiritual elements are added to the cowries. These cowries are
179 sometimes cast on a prepared table or in a basketry tray and in some cases it is cast in a sacred
180 circle of kaolin on the floor. In affirming this, Lindsay (2005) and Thorpe (1995) stated that in
181 some African cultures, casting of cowries is performed, using sacred divination plates made of
182 wood or performed on the ground, within a circle.

183 The informants stated that the cowries talk to them when they cast them and they also have the
184 power to read and interpret the meaning of each cowry depending on the pattern of its

185 orientation. Related to the above narration, Luna (2019) stated that the cowries are the doorway
186 through which one can access the world of the ancestors, the world that holds infinite knowledge
187 and wisdom and a timeless view one cannot otherwise tap into. According to the traditional
188 priests, there are male and female cowries and they are consecrated before they can be used. The
189 study revealed that healers who throw cowries to identify the cause of various diseases and
190 misfortunes operate with the power of dwarfs and are initiated by them before they can cast the
191 cowries.

192 Interestingly, if a patient doubts the result of cast cowries, he or she has the privilege to request
193 the diviner to cast them again. The patient may tell the healer that if his divination is authentic,
194 he should for example, let five of the cowries intersect. And surely five of the cowries will
195 intersect to conscience the patient. Moreover, in Asuo Abresua Shrine also when the client is not
196 convinced of the outcome of the cowries, the priestess with the assistance of her spokesman
197 slaughters a local fowl and asks the deity to accept it if really the outcome of the cowries she
198 threw is correct. The deity instantly accepts the fowl by allowing it to recline at its back if the
199 outcome is right. Aside slaughtering a fowl, an egg can be thrown to confirm the result of the
200 cowries. When the priestess throws an egg and it bursts and all the broken shell lies at its outer
201 part (back) it means the outcome of the cowries is correct. A similar act of confirmation was
202 exhibited when the researcher was about to enter the shrine room to take photographs.

203 The throwing of the cowries helps the medicine man to determine the root cause of diseases
204 especially those that emanate from spiritual means.

205 **4.2.2 Diagnosing with Special Leaf**

206 According to the priestess (Personal Communication, Asuo Abereasua Shrine, 24th October,
207 2018), early in the morning she fetches a special leaf and performs rituals on it (that is she puts
208 the leaf in her palm and while standing with the hand containing the leaf opened, she stretches it
209 forward to make incantations to call on the spirits to activate the leaf to function effectively in
210 the diagnostic processes). She then puts the leaf on her stool and sits on it or sometimes hides it
211 around her to prevent people from seeing it. After this act, she is able to detect the root cause of
212 every problem clients come with, even without telling her. The priestess explained that the
213 moment she sees the patient or the client coming, she gets to know the entire problem he or she
214 is going through. All the respondents at the Asuo Abresua shrine were of the firm conviction that
215 diagnosing by the use of the leaf is very effective.

216 **4.2.3 Diagnosing by the use of money**

217 Interviews and observation revealed that the priest of Bongari shrine diagnose various cases
218 through the use of money. In a related argument, Okonkwo (2012) confirmed that diagnosing
219 through divination or by spiritual means can be done through the use of money, sand, cola nut
220 and other objects valuable to the deity or spirit. When a client consults the shrine, the priest does
221 not physically delve into the client's problem or reasons for consulting him but rather asks the
222 client to take an amount of money and whispers out his or her problem on it. This practice is very
223 similar to what most Christians do when requesting for something from God. The elders of the
224 church normally ask the congregation to verbalize all their problems on the money and offer it to
225 the Lord and he will answer their request. There is a strong belief that spirits hear the requests of
226 their devotees when they speak through valuable items like money, cola and gold and offer it to
227 them.

228 After speaking on the money, it is then presented to the traditional priest who at this time is fully
229 possessed by the spirit or deity. The possessed priest just looks at the money and reveals
230 everything the client said or requested; how the client got ill, people or a particular person
231 responsible for the client's illness and also prognosticates what is ahead of the client. A typical
232 example was what the researcher experienced for the sake of authenticity when he wanted to
233 dialogue with Bongari, the deity of KuneGyendu/Bungari shrine at Adwumakase-Kese in the
234 Ashanti Region. The researcher took an amount of money and spoke on it with a very low tone at
235 distance away from the shrine thus "I want to see you and discuss with you how you diagnose
236 and treat diseases". About an hour later the money was presented to the possessed priest, he
237 observed the money for some time and stated "*You want to see me and discuss with me how I*
238 *diagnose and treat diseases?*" The possessed priest began to disclose hidden things about the
239 researcher which he did not even ask for. For more proof, the possessed priest ordered the
240 spokesman to call the next person on the line. In the presence of the researcher, the moment the
241 person entered the room (shrine) the possessed priest stated

242 Antwi your illness is as a result of a curse invoked by a lady who used to be your
243 girlfriend. In fact many people are accusing you that your illness is as a result of
244 theft but that is false accusation. Antwi, you have been to a lot of hospitals and
245 taken a number of scans and x-rays but the doctors are unable to even identify the
246 illness.

247 Afterwards, Bongari , the deity who is manifesting through the priest told the researcher to ask
248 Antwi if what he has revealed to him is false. The patient boldly testified that everything said is
249 the truth.

250 This avowed to the fact that these traditional healers with the assistance of the deities are able to
251 diagnose diseases and see the future of people through the use of money and other valuable items
252 of their interest. All the testimonies that came from the clients as well as the researcher testify
253 that the deity's means of uncovering the unknown through the priest by the use of money indeed
254 is not manipulated in any way. Such act psychologically builds a very potent trust in the deity
255 and his priest and also goes a very long way to attract more people to consult the shrine.

256 **4.2.4 Diagnosing by Carrying the Image of the Deity**

257 This is a way of consulting the spirit world to identify the cause of the problem and also to
258 discover whether there is violation of an established order on the part of the client at Bongari
259 Shrine. Libation and incantations are made by the priest and the client's reasons for consulting
260 the shrine are presented to the deity. With the assistance of the spokesman, the image of the deity
261 which is housed in a brass pan is carried by the priest on his head. The moment the priest carries
262 it, he becomes unbalanced and acts as if the brass pan containing the image of the deity is falling
263 from his head. At this point, the spokesman supports by holding part of the image of the deity the
264 priest is carrying to help him. It may be that the spirit is too heavy to balance the priest's body
265 weight. Even though he is in trance and unstable, the image of the deity will not fall from his
266 head. This is because when the image is carried, It is believed the spirit takes absolute control of
267 the priest and he starts to disclose hidden things associated with the patient. The image of the
268 deity in the brass pan then gets stuck on the priest's head and nothing can separate it from the
269 head unless the deity has finished operating. From the aforementioned, it can be deduced that
270 mere human beings do not have the power to stop deities when they are operating through
271 beings. Through this activity the deity unveils the cause of the problem through the priest.

272 Similarly, the priest of Asuhylae Tano and his spokesman also explain to the researcher when the
273 priest also carries the image of the deity. According to the researcher's informants, after
274 performing libation, three eggs are presented to the deity. With the assistance of the elders, the
275 deity which is said to be housed in a brass pan is carried by the priest with the help of the
276 linguists. The moment the priest carries the deity on his head, he starts to behave as if the brass
277 pan is falling from his head as in the case of the priest of KuneGyendu/Bongari shrine which has
278 been discussed above. The spokesmen then help the priest to sit in an *asipim* chair while the
279 image of the deity in the brass pan is on his head. It was revealed that he sits on the *asipim* chair
280 used by Asante chiefs because the deity is believed to be the King of the Tano gods. One of the
281 spokesmen throws white kaolin or powder on him continuously while he is seated with the
282 maximum support from the other spokesmen. The client is then permitted by the elders to kneel
283 before the possessed priest. The possessed priest then takes one of the eggs brought by the client
284 and moves it around him or her and critically observes the egg and starts to disclose the root
285 cause of the problem to the client. From the above discussions, it is realized that even though
286 there are similarities in carrying the image of the deities at the healing centres visited by the
287 researcher, there are slight differences in their acts.

288 **4.2.5 Diagnosing through Trance**

289 At Bongari shrine the priest (Personal Communication, 11th March, 2018), stated that he
290 sometimes enters into trance when a patient is brought to his shrine. While he is in trance, words
291 spoken by him are noted in a book by the secretary of the shrine. This is because when he is out
292 of trance, he cannot remember a single word he said. Similarly, Schmidt and Huskinson (2010)
293 offer a useful dialogue on deity possession. According to her, deity possession is a complete but
294 temporary domination of the priest or priestess' body, and the blotting of his or her

295 consciousness by a distinct alien power of known or unknown origin. The pronouncement made
296 during this time is usually bizarre and unclear as observed (18th of March, 2018). The
297 practitioner uses this medium not only to diagnose illness, but also to find the necessary
298 treatment.

299 The practitioner while in trance is thought to link up with his divine being and the spirit of the
300 sick person to find out the one responsible for the problem or the root cause of the illness. In the
301 course of this, the divine spirit narrates the root cause of the illness through the practitioner, and
302 indicates as well the sacrifices necessary to appease the gods. This piece of information is also
303 acknowledged by Sofowora (1993) in his study of Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine in
304 Africa Spectrum.

305 The priest stated emphatically that he serves as a horse that is mounted by their deities and use
306 them as they want. According to Coffie (1996) this expression points out the fact that gods
307 mount human beings, just as a rider mounts a horse. From the above manifestation, the priest or
308 the priestess is a “horse” while the deity is the “rider.” The researcher’s informants further added
309 that while the priest is possessed, he throws white powder on his face and head. Sometimes a
310 fowl is sacrificed for the deity when he mounts on the priest. At this time, they command with
311 power and authority and unearths all the secrets behind people’s problems. According to the
312 respondents, while the possessed priests are displaying, they sometimes reveal concealed issues
313 about the audience

314 The informants of the present researcher were absolutely convinced that the trance is indeed
315 helping in diagnosing diseases and other problems at the shrine. Twenty four (24) of the healers’
316 clients at the shrines representing 100% of those interviewed about trance stated emphatically

317 that the deity through the priest was able to uncover the unknown about their problems. In a
318 testimony to prove a point, a member of a focus group discussion had this to say;

319 'I and my husband brought our daughter who had been ill for a year to this shrine
320 some weeks ago. When the priest went into trance, he told us that the illness of
321 my daughter was spiritual and he mentioned the one behind it. It was my junior
322 sister who stays with us under the same roof. The deity instructed us to perform
323 some rituals when we went home. We did what we were instructed to do and my
324 junior sister started shouting 'I will say, I will say everything'. She stated that she
325 was behind my daughter's illness. According to her, she was being whipped by
326 some spirits and was shouting all over the house. I brought her here and she was
327 freed and my daughter too regained her health. We are even here to thank the
328 priest and his god for what they have done for us. Look my brother I will not
329 waste my time here ooh if he is not potent (TMAFC 1, Personal Communication
330 at Bongari Shrine, 18 March, 2018).

331 This and other experiences shared by the clients with the researcher confirmed their belief in the
332 effectiveness of the deities' powers and their total trust in the priest and their deity. Testimonies
333 like this attract more people to consult the gods since many people have great trust in this kind of
334 divination. This explains why many people consult diviners before taking any action in their
335 lives.

336 **4.2.6 Diagnosing through Dreams**

337 According to the priests interviewed, dreaming on the cause of a client's illness is very vibrant in
338 traditional medication. In affirming this, Mettle – Nunoo (1990) stated that the deities teach and
339 inspire through dreams and guide the traditional priest in his daily activities which include

340 diagnosing various diseases. The priests further stated that in most cases the gods and the
341 ancestors come and divulge everything about the cause of a particular sickness to him through
342 dreams. Scientifically, Freudian theory of dreams state that dreams reveal insight into hidden
343 desires and emotions (Carey & Norton, 2009). From the above assertion, it could be inferred that
344 what the priest desires and thinks about is what he may dream of. But this may not always be the
345 case. One may also dream about something he or she has not thought about before.

346 The priests again declared that in most cases the gods and the ancestors reveal to them the patient
347 who will be coming to the shrine, the type of problem the patient will be coming with, the cause
348 of the problem and how the problem can be solved. Sometimes this information is revealed to
349 him some days or even weeks before the person comes. One of the spokesmen stated that there
350 have been several instances in which the priest (of Bongari Shrine) told them that a patient will
351 be coming to the shrine and further stated the type of illness the patient will be coming with.

352 The traditional healers again disclosed that they sometimes grind some herbs and smear it on the
353 client's body and leave him or her to sleep. In the patient's sleep, the cause of patient's illness is
354 revealed to him or her. A client who had such experience thus shared his sentiment;

355 I am someone who is doubtful, so when I came to Nana, he just ground some
356 leaves and applied it on my body without asking me why I came to him. In the
357 night, I dreamt and found out that it was my co-worker who was using 'juju' on
358 me. Everything on how he used it to cause my illness was revealed to me
359 (TMAMC 2, Personal Communication, 18th March, 2018).

360 Similarly, the priests also made it known that sometimes they squeeze the leaves and drop the
361 sap into the client's eyes and leave him or her to sleep. In the course of his/her sleep, the root
362 cause of the illness and anyone associated with the illness are revealed to the client.

363 **4.2.7 Staring at the client**

364 Another means through which the traditional healers use to diagnose diseases and other problems
365 is by just looking fixedly at the client with her eyes widely open. They stated that the deities had
366 opened their eyes and ears to see and hear beyond the ordinary. Likewise Parish (2003) in her
367 study found that special herbs are squeezed into the eyes and ears of the traditional priests and
368 priestesses so that they can see and hear things that an ordinary person cannot. This means of
369 diagnosing helps the priestess to identify all kinds of problems the moment she sees the client.
370 An instance observed at Asuo Abresua shrine was when priestess by just looking at a man
371 disclosed to him that he has been cursed. The gods revealed through her to the man that he
372 fought with his wife when the wife accused him of committing adultery with another woman.
373 She further unveiled to the man that he whipped the wife with paddle and as a result the wife
374 called on a river deity to curse him whiles he was not aware of the curse. The man confirmed that
375 the priestess' revelation was correct but declared that he did not know his wife had cursed him.
376 Moreover, the priests and the priestesses also stated that the deities mostly come and stand by
377 them during diagnostic processes and tell them hidden things about clients the moment they see
378 them. In some cases too, they sit in deep concentration, in front of the client and through that the
379 gods reveal to them everything about the client. It is for this reason that Scott (2005) contended
380 that the deities interact with humans in ways that carry humans to new level of consciousness
381 beyond the grounded preoccupations of ordinary life.

382 **4.2.8 Diagnosing by the use of Talisman**

383 My informants said that they sometimes diagnose by wearing a special prepared talisman
384 (*bansre*) around their waist wrist. They added that this talisman has been empowered by the

385 deities and it performs a lot of wonders. In related matter, Varner (2008) states that the secret
386 powers and magical effects of amulets and talismans come from the special ritual done over
387 them. It was unveiled that before wearing the talisman, special incantations are recited over it in
388 order to activate it. Varner (2008) further supported this claim by stating that the effectiveness of
389 the amulets and the talisman depends on the incantations made during the ritual process.
390 Inferring from the researcher's observations, the use of talisman and amulets bring about contact
391 between the traditional healers and the divine beings.

392 According to the traditional healers, with the talisman on their waist, they are able to reveal the
393 problems affecting the people who come to them. The talisman when worn around their waists
394 and wrists open their eyes and gives them the power to see beyond the ordinary. In similar but
395 different dimension, Whitehurst (2016) opines that the use of a pendulum helps her to access the
396 akashic records (a compendium of all human events, thoughts, words, emotions, and intent ever
397 to have occurred in the past and present, and to happen in future.), or the omnipresent energy
398 field that links everything about the client. Whitehurst explained that the pendulum tool helps her
399 tune into the client's place and situation even when she is not in close physical proximity to the
400 client.

401 One of the clients indicated how a traditional healer asked him questions that surprised him
402 when he went there because the healer had not even met him before and did not even know the
403 town in which he lived:

404 The moment I entered the shrine room, she pronounced my name and welcomed
405 me with a beautiful smile, then she asked me, "Why did you fight your mother on
406 Thursday three weeks ago?" Now you are not in good terms with your mother.

407 Your father even came in to resolve the issue but you didn't agree. Why? I was
408 shocked because all that she was saying was correct. I just had a very strong belief
409 in her (TMAMC 3, Personal Communication, 17th October, 2018).

410 Such revelations psychologically send a strong signal to the client making him or her
411 believe every information given by the priestess.

412 **4.2.9 Diagnosing with a pot of water**

413 Stirring a pot of water to identify the cause of diseases and other problems is mostly used by
414 some traditional healers in the Ashanti Region. According to a priestess (at Bokankye Akua
415 Gyabon shrine), the pot has been spiritually sanctified and contains special water from River
416 Tano and other substances. The reason for using water from River Tano is because the deity is
417 one of the Tano deities. The priestess stated that during diagnosis, she knocks the pot three times
418 before she opens it. This is a sign of alerting the deity that she is about to enter into her abode.
419 The priestess then performs libation alongside incantations to invite the deity into the client's
420 matter and also presents to the deity the reasons behind her invitation. In related matter, Lawal
421 (2012) in his study of Traditional Medicine practices among the Yoruba people of Nigeria
422 established that incantations are made before the medical history of the patient and the events
423 leading to the imbalance of the patient are revealed through the pot. In the process of stirring the
424 liquid in the pot with a special made paddle, the deity speaks out of sight issues concerning the
425 client's problem to her. The deity through the priestess unveils the nitty-gritty of the problem to
426 the client.

427 The deity, according to the priestess of Bokankye Akua Gyabon, makes sure that all the news
428 about the clients' problems revealed through her, always gets to the clients without distortion by

429 the priestess. She further stated that if she changes the statement given to her by the deity, the
430 deity repeats the same statement and if she does not provide the client with the correct statement
431 made by the deity, she at that instance enters the priestess and possesses her. Without her
432 knowledge, the deity rectifies the false information given by her to the client. The moment the
433 deity finishes, she leaves the priestess and she becomes normal again. The deity according to the
434 researcher's informant is a white god (*bosom fufuo*) and does not condone to lies.

435 The respondents interviewed stated categorically that they were diagnosed to know the cause of
436 their worries and troubles by the use of the pot. For instance one of the respondents disclosed to
437 the researcher that;

438 My seven year old son was suffering from epilepsy. While seeking for remedy for
439 him, one medical doctor hinted me to send him to a spiritualist since the illness
440 had spiritual affiliation. When I came to Nana, she was able to disclose of the
441 problem by stirring the water in the pot. The priestess as she stirred the pot asked
442 me; "Do you remember a day your neighbour in the compound house gave your
443 son a hot plantain which scalded his hand?" I remembered it and said yes, and the
444 priestess continued by saying that was when she gave the illness to your son. She
445 performed some ritual for my son and instructed me to sacrifice some items.
446 When I completed all the rites, my son got healed (TMAFC 4, Personal
447 Communication, 20th September, 2018).

448 This statement and other claims given by the respondents suggest that all what the priestess says
449 is divine since they come from the deity. In relation to this case, Azongo and Yidana (2015)

450 affirmed that the individual diviners have no influence on the outcomes of divination
451 consultations even though some of them have been accused of being quack diviners.

452 **4.2.10 Diagnosing with Egg**

453 Egg is another medium through which the priests and the priestesses use to identify and expose
454 hidden things about clients. The egg according to Miro (2014) has long been regarded as a
455 symbol of life, the idea is that it takes on energy. The deity sometimes directs them to pass the
456 egg around the client and then throw it on the floor. The moment the egg bursts, they look into
457 the egg which has been split open with their maximum concentration. Through that they see
458 everything troubling the client and begin to tell the client his or her problems. Miro (2014) adds
459 that when using the egg, the diviner is essentially going through the client's aura, and body,
460 pinpointing specific areas and allowing the eggs to absorb the energy. The egg traps the energy
461 and the negativity transfers from the client to the egg.

462 The priest Asuhyiae Tano Shrine (Personal Communication, 13th October, 2018) also explained
463 how he uses the egg to uncover the unknown. Stressing the same point he stated:

464 When someone comes with a problem, an egg is given to him or her to speak onto
465 it and stating the reasons for seeking the deity's assistance. Afterwards, I collect
466 the egg back and draws it to my ears and act as if I am listening to something
467 from the egg. I then throw the egg on the floor for it to burst. Afterwards, I look
468 into the broken egg and tell the client the root cause of his or her problem. I have
469 tried this method of diagnosing for so many years and I have never failed
470 (Personal Communication, the priest of Asuhyiae Tano Shrine, 13th October,
471 2018).'

472 It could be observed that egg plays tremendous role in divination and has the power to do
473 wonders only when it is used very well.

474 **4.2.11 Mirror Gazing (Scrying)**

475 The mirror is a surface, usually of glass coated with a metal amalgam, which reflects a clear
476 image. Mirror gazing is also called crystallomancy, and it refers to the use of reflective surfaces
477 for the purposes of divination. The healers revealed that mirror gazing is another way they use to
478 diagnose hidden illnesses. A priestess of Bokankye Akua Gyabon shrine stated that she mostly
479 goes by this method when she is possessed by 'Naaho Zugu' (a deity from Northern part of
480 Ghana). She explained that the moment the patient enters the consulting room, she (priestess)
481 who at that time is fully possessed by 'Naaho Zugu' just looks into her mirror and discloses
482 everything about the client.

483 According to some of the healers, when a patient consults them to find out the cause of his or her
484 problems, they sit in front of the mirror with their maximum concentration and makes some
485 incantation to invite the spirits and instantly, everything about the sickness is disclosed to them.
486 Even though the mirror is a normal one like what we have been seeing and using, it has been
487 imbued with power (*ye adwira*) which helps the priest to see hidden things.

488 More so, during crystallomancy, the traditional healers are able to see the future of their patients.
489 Similarly, Regal (2009) and Guiley (2010) affirmed that mirror gazing is practised in many
490 cultures with the belief that it can reveal the past, present, or future. Worstell (2018) also points
491 out that the outcome of gazing through the mirror may emanate from the subconscious mind or
492 imagination of the priestess. Regal (2009) rebuttals by stating that, there is no systematic body of
493 empirical support for such view in general.

494

495 **Conclusion**

496 The indigenous cultural ways of diagnosing ailments were successful and are still successfully
497 used by many traditional healers for identifying diseases which in most cases the orthodox
498 medication cannot identify. Most people perceive the indigenous cultural modes of diagnoses as
499 fetish, idolatrous, pagan and are less progressive and as a result, many groups of people
500 especially the educated, Christians and the younger generation are influenced to devalue their
501 natural culture and adopt new life style and technology. But this study has brought to light that,
502 these indigenous diagnostic measures are very effective and less time and energy consuming.
503 The ability to diagnose illness is considered as a gift from God, the Supreme Being since all
504 powers belong to him and every good thing is from him. These traditional healers also use their
505 divine powers to unearth the cause of all kinds of ailments to help mankind which are part of the
506 good deeds of the Supreme Being. In diagnosing of diseases the traditional healers take a holistic
507 approach which are the social, natural, spiritual and the cosmic environment which is not in the
508 case of the orthodox medication.

509 The diviners and some people believe that the neglect of the indigenous cultural ways of
510 identifying the cause of diseases in the public health care centres has resulted in increasing rate
511 of mortality, infertility and other problems in the country which could easily be identified and
512 treated by the traditional healers. The best solution to this issue is that the government and the
513 stakeholders should give recognition to these diviners and spiritual healers by putting up nice
514 buildings (clinics and hospitals) and providing them the necessary needs like what they have
515 been doing for the orthodox health centres and if possible integrate the traditional medication

516 into the orthodox ones. By so doing people will fully patronize it and this will go a long way to
517 sustain and sell our culture.

518 **Competing Interest**

519 We declare that we have no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests
520 that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this
521 manuscript.

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