
Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology

Health and Illness in the World's Cultures

Volume I: Topics

Volume II: Cultures

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Edited by

Carol R. Ember

*Human Relations Area Files at Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut*

and

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Preface

Illness and death are significant events for people everywhere. No one is spared. But medical beliefs and practices are not the same everywhere. How people understand the causes of illness and death and how they cope with these events vary from culture to culture. It is not surprising therefore that medical practitioners and others are becoming increasingly aware of the need to understand the influence of society and culture on medical belief and practice. Culture—the customary ways of thinking and acting in a society—often affects the outcome of illness, and even which illnesses occur. So those who are actively engaged in studying health and illness are coming to realize that biological *and* cultural factors need to be considered if we are to reduce human suffering.

The professional medicine of Western cultures has been called “biomedicine,” because it mostly deals with the biology of the human body. But biomedicine, like the medicine of other cultures, is also influenced by conditions and beliefs in the culture, and therefore reflects the value and norms of its creators. So, if biomedicine is socially constructed and not just based on science, its beliefs and practices may partly derive from assumptions and biases in the culture. For example, it used to be thought that some people refrained from drinking milk because they were ignorant. Now, biomedicine realizes that the avoidance of milk is a rational response to the likelihood that drinking milk results in diarrhea and other discomforts in people who lack an enzyme (lactase) that allows easy digestion of the sugar in milk (lactose). Anthropologists were the first to realize that drinking milk would cause serious problems for many people. The anthropologists’ fieldwork in other cultures around the world revealed that people in many places that have milking animals must sour the milk before they can drink it, to reduce or eliminate the sugar in it that would otherwise make them sick.

Severe diarrhea may also be an effect of the culture’s system of social stratification. The direct causes of the diarrhea may be biological, in the sense that the deaths are caused by bacterial or other infection. But why are so many infants exposed to those infectious agents? Usually, the main reason is social or cultural. The affected infants may mostly be poor. Because they are poor, they are likely to live with infected drinking water. Similarly, malnutrition may be the biological result of a diet poor in protein. But such a diet is usually also a cultural phenomenon, reflecting a society that has different classes of people, with very unequal access to the necessities of life, and unequal access to decent medical care. For this and other reasons, medical anthropology is developing what has been called a “biocultural synthesis” in its studies of health and illness.

Medical anthropology may even be in the forefront of the movement that is returning the entire field of anthropology to its biocultural roots. In any case, the growth of jobs in medical anthropology is one of the more striking developments in contemporary anthropology. Medical anthropology has developed into a very popular specialty, and the Society for Medical Anthropology is now the second largest unit in the American Anthropological Association.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENCYCLOPEDIA

A total of 53 thematic and comparative essays begin these volumes. These essays are grouped into five sections: general concepts and perspectives; medical systems; political, economic, and social issues; sexuality, reproduction, and the life cycle; and health conditions and diseases. Then there are 52 cultural portraits of health and illness, articles that describe the state of health and illness in 52 particular cultures around the world. Every cultural region of the world is represented, as are cultures at all levels of social complexity. The *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology* is unique. In addition to providing a large range of thematic essays, representing the various perspectives in medical anthropology, these volumes are unique in focusing on so many particular cultures. No other single reference work comes close to matching the depth and breadth of information on the varying cultural background of health and illness around the world. We are able to provide the information contained here through the efforts of more than 100 contributors—generally

anthropologists but also other social scientists—who usually have firsthand experience with how medical cultures vary around the world. Focusing on comparative topics and how health and illness are viewed and treated in the world's cultures is consistent with HRAF's mission to encourage and facilitate comparative worldwide studies of human society, culture, and behavior. Our aim is to leave the reader with a real sense of how different cultures deal with health and illness, and what anthropology has contributed to understanding health and illness.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARTICLES

The thematic and comparative essays vary in how they are organized, not just in their topics. The authors were encouraged by the editors to structure their discussions as they saw fit. On the other hand, the articles on health and illness in particular cultures generally follow the same format to provide maximum comparability. That is, most of the culture articles cover the same topics, the list of which we developed with the help of our Advisory Board (see the headings in boldface below). If there is substantial variation within the culture (e.g., by class or gender), the author was instructed to note it where appropriate, either in a particular section or at the end. A heading may be omitted if information on it is lacking or not applicable. The headings that follow are found in the vast majority of the articles to facilitate search and retrieval of information. Thus, the reader may easily compare how the cultures of the world differ and are similar in the ways they deal with health and illness.

The outline for the culture articles includes the following topics.

Alternative Names of the Culture

Other names or ethnonyms used in the literature.

Location and Linguistic Affiliation

Where the described culture is located (region of the world, country and location within the country, where appropriate). The language spoken by the people described, and the larger language family it belongs to.

Overview of the Culture

A summary of the culture to orient the reader, including information on demography, history, economy and occupations, social and political conditions, family and kinship, religion, etc.

The Context of Health: Environmental, Economic, Social, and Political Factors

This section first provides an overview of the health situation, with epidemiological statistics if available, or with observer assessments if statistics are not available. Then there is a discussion of the global and local factors enhancing or detracting from health, including social factors (historical and colonial, if appropriate), the impact of diet and nutrition (positive and negative), and the health infrastructure.

Medical Practitioners

Types of full-time and part-time practitioners in the society, and descriptions of their roles and the people they serve.

Classification of Illness, Theories of Illness, and Treatment of Illness

Discussion of the cultural understanding of illness (biomedical, other). Even where the biomedical paradigm is accepted, there may be alternative viewpoints, which will be described. Mental illness will also be described in this

section. Discussions of age-related conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease) will be reserved for the section on Health Through the Life Cycle (see below).

Sexuality and Reproduction

Discussion of sexual attitudes and practices, and their impacts on health and fecundity and fertility, and other factors affecting fecundity and fertility. Ideas about conception, ideal family size, and population controls and their consequences (e.g., the effect of infertility on a woman's status).

Health Through the Life Cycle

Pregnancy and Birth. Beliefs, attitudes, and practices relating to pregnancy, abortion, miscarriage, and birth.

Infancy. Postpartum practices, including breast-feeding. Reaction to multiple births, birth defects, treatment of the healthy and unhealthy infant, and number and types of caretakers. Definitions of and duration of infancy. Special risks for one gender as compared with another. Special protections against or treatments of illness in infancy.

Childhood. Care of children, ideas about discipline and length of childhood, if known, parental acceptance and rejection, and cultural variation in concepts of child abuse. Special medical or health issues during this period.

Adolescence. If there is no apparent difference in treatment of adolescents as compared with children, this is noted. Genital operations if any. Special medical or health issues during this period.

Adulthood. Special health or medical issues that come up in adulthood or that are related to marriage (e.g., domestic abuse, unequal access by gender to medical care). Attitudes and practices regarding middle age (e.g., menopause) are addressed here.

The Aged. Status and treatment of the aged. Discussion of the major medical problems of this age group.

Dying and Death. Treatment of the dying, concepts about death, reactions to it, and treatment of the body. Risks to surviving spouses, if related to cultural practice (e.g., required suicide).

Changing Health Patterns (optional)

If changes over time have not been described in previous sections, this is where they will be described.

References

References to sources in the text are included to allow the reader to explore topics and cultures further.

USING THE *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY*

This reference work can be used by a variety of people for a variety of purposes. It can be used both to gain a general understanding of medical anthropology and to find out about particular cultures and topics. A bibliography is provided at the end of each entry to facilitate further investigation.

Beyond serving as a basic reference resource, the *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology* also serves readers with more focused needs. For researchers interested in comparing cultures, this work provides information that can guide the selection of particular cultures for further study. For those interested in international studies, the bibliographies in each entry can lead one quickly to the relevant social science literature as well as provide a state-of-the-art assessment of knowledge about medical cultures around the world. For curriculum developers and teachers seeking to internationalize the curriculum, this work is a basic reference and educational resource as well as a directory to other materials. For government officials, it is a repository of information not likely to be available in any other single publication; in many cases, the information provided here is not available at all elsewhere. For students, from high school through graduate school, it provides background and bibliographic information for term papers and class projects. And for travelers, it provides an introduction to the medical cultures of places they may be visiting.

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Glossary

- abortifacient.** Any drug or compound that induces the expulsion of an embryo or fetus.
- abortion.** A spontaneous (usually called miscarriage) or induced expulsion of an embryo or fetus.
- acculturation.** The process of extensive borrowing of aspects of culture in the context of superordinate-subordinate relations between societies; usually occurs as the result of external pressure.
- acupuncture.** A Chinese medical technique that consists of the insertion of one or several small metal needles into the skin and underlying tissues at precise points on the body.
- adaptation.** Refers to genetic changes that allow an organism to survive and reproduce in a specific environment.
- adaptive.** A trait that enhances survival and reproductive success in a particular environment. Usually applied to biological evolution, the term is also often used by cultural anthropologists to refer to cultural traits that enhance reproductive success.
- affinal kin.** One's relatives by marriage.
- agency.** Having the capacity or authority to act; also can refer to an establishment or organization that can act for another or can carry out a function.
- agricultural societies.** Societies that depend primarily on domesticated plants for subsistence; see Horticulture and Intensive Agriculture for the major type of agriculture.
- agropastoralism.** A type of subsistence economy based largely on agriculture with the raising of domesticated animals playing an important part.
- AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).** A recent fatal disease caused by the HIV virus. A positive HIV (see HIV) test result does not mean that a person has AIDS. A diagnosis of AIDS is made using certain clinical criteria (e.g., AIDS indicator illnesses such as *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, malignancies such as Kaposi's sarcoma and lymphoma).
- albinism.** A hereditary condition where melanin and other pigments are absent; such pigments normally provide protection against ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- alcoholism.** A disorder characterized by an individual's excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages that is causing harm to the individual and/or to others.
- alimentary.** Having to do with nutrition; in humans, the beginning of the digestive process begins in the mouth and proceeds through the alimentary canal or tract through connected organs (esophagus, stomach, small and large intestines; waste products are excreted through the end of the canal at the anus).
- allele.** One member of a pair of genes.
- allopathic medicine.** An alternative word for biomedicine. The term "allopathic" designates the biomedical tradition of working "against pathology," wherein the treatment is meant to oppose or attack the disease as directly as possible. Contrast with **homeopathic medicine**.
- altered states of consciousness (trance).** A range of states that generally share properties of inducing a slow wave pattern (alpha and theta) in the brain. This slow wave pattern reflects enhanced activation of lower brain structures, particularly the paleomammalian (or limbic) brain. ASC are found universally and are institutionalized in most societies in religion and healing rituals. ASC are induced through many ritual activities, such as drumming, dancing, fasting, arduous activities, and drugs. ASC provide access to basic structures of consciousness and unconscious complexes or structures that are generally interpreted as spiritual entities.
- Alzheimer's disease.** A disability characterized by memory loss that affects the middle-aged and elderly. Manifests in the fifth or later decades of life. Only 5–10% of Alzheimer's cases are inherited. Brain tissue contains unusual amounts of two gummy proteins, the beta- and tau-amyloids.
- ambilineal Descent.** The rule of descent that affiliates an individual with groups of kin related to him or her through men or women.

- amniocentesis.** A surgical procedure inserting a hollow needle through the abdominal wall to extract a sample of amniotic fluid from the amniotic sac of the uterus of a pregnant woman for the purpose of diagnosing genetic defects in the fetus.
- amok.** see **amuk.**
- amuk (amuck).** A temporary state of physically aggressive insanity relatively common in Malay populations. In a suicidal attack, the amuk person attempts to maim or kill virtually everyone present. Often thought of as a culture-bound syndrome.
- amulet.** A charm (often an ornament) believed to have powers to help the possessor or ward off evil.
- ancestor spirits.** Supernatural beings who are the ghosts of dead relatives.
- androgynous.** Refers to having both male and female characteristics or suitable for either sex, or having traditional female and male roles eliminated or reversed.
- ancestor worship.** Veneration or reverence of ancestor spirits; ancestor spirits may be called upon for help or may be given sacrifices to have them refrain from harming the living.
- Angelman syndrome.** Uncommon condition characterized by seizures, mental impairment and growth retardation, protruding tongue, floppy muscle tone, large jaw, an inability to talk, and excessive and inappropriate laughter. AS is caused by a small deletion in chromosome 15, inherited maternally.
- anemia.** A condition of too few red blood cells in the bloodstream which results in not enough oxygen to the tissues and organs of the body.
- animism.** A term used by Edward Tylor to describe a belief in a dual existence for all things—a physical, visible body and a psychic, invisible soul.
- anthropology.** A discipline that studies humans, focusing on the study of differences and similarities, both biological and cultural, in human populations. Anthropology is concerned with typical biological and cultural characteristics of human populations in all periods and in all parts of the world.
- anthropology of food.** Focuses on the cultural and social significance of food and eating. Food is studied as a way of understanding social and cultural processes and to reveal symbolic structures.
- anthropometrics.** The systematic collection and correlation of measurements relating to the human body.
- antimicrobial.** A drug for killing or suppressing the growth or proliferation of microorganisms.
- anticipation.** A phenomenon whereby a genetic disorder becomes increasingly severe from one generation to the next (the age of onset usually gets lower, as well).
- antiseptis.** Processes, procedures, or treatments for killing microorganisms.
- applied anthropology.** The branch of anthropology that concerns itself with applying anthropological knowledge to achieve practical goals, usually in the service of an agency outside the traditional academic setting. Also called **practicing anthropology.**
- association.** An organized group not based exclusively on kinship or territory.
- atherosclerosis.** Progressive narrowing and hardening of the blood vessels over time.
- asthma.** Disorder of airways and lungs characterized by reversible inflammatory obstruction, breathing difficulties, wheezing, and hypersensitivity.
- autosomal recessive inheritance.** The key feature of the recessive mode is that a new mutation does not result in a new phenotype, so that only two phenotypes exist, one containing at least one dominant allele, and the other containing two copies of the recessive allele. An autosomal chromosome is a non-sex chromosome.
- avunculocal residence.** A pattern of residence in which a married couple settles with or near the husband's mother's brother.
- Ayurveda.** A medical system whose practice (in North India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Arab world) dates back thousands of years; Ayurveda emphasizes the concept of balance. There are three important biological modes and people are believed to differ in their natures as to the importance of various modes in their systems. Professionally trained Ayurvedic practitioners assess a patient's nature and try to correct imbalances primarily through diet. Different treatments are given to different patients depending upon their natures.
- balanced reciprocity.** Giving with the expectation of a straightforward immediate or limited-time trade.
- band.** A fairly small, usually nomadic local group that is politically autonomous.

- barrio.** A neighborhood in a city; used in Spanish-speaking countries.
- behavioral ecology.** The study of how all kinds of behavior may be related to the environment. The theoretical orientation involves the application of biological evolutionary principles to the behavior (including social behavior) of animals, including humans. Also called sociobiology, particularly when applied to social organization and social behavior.
- berdache.** A male transvestite in some Native American societies.
- beriberi.** A nutritional disorder due to a deficiency of vitamin B1 (thiamin) which impairs the nerves and the heart.
- bilateral kinship.** The type of kinship system in which individuals affiliate more or less equally with their mother's and father's relatives; descent groups are absent.
- bilingual.** Using or knowing two languages.
- bilocal residence.** A pattern of residence in which a married couple lives with or near either the husband's parents or the wife's parents.
- biocultural anthropology.** A field whose central interest is the evolution of successful reproductive traits and strategies in humans and nonhuman primates in the context of their physical and social environments. Considers the importance of both biological and cultural factors.
- bioethics.** Pertains to the ethical dilemmas and moral norms of health professionals (primarily physicians) emerging within contemporary biomedicine.
- biological (physical) anthropology.** The study of humans as biological organisms, dealing with the emergence and evolution of humans and with contemporary biological variations among human populations.
- biomedicine.** The dominant medical paradigm in Western countries today with the *bio* part emphasizing the biological emphasis of this professional medical system, particularly the focus on specific diseases and cures for those diseases. Diseases are considered as having natural causes (e.g., germs) and there is relatively little emphasis placed on the person in the larger social and cultural system.
- biopower.** The insight that control over health can be achieved by getting populations and individuals to internalize certain disciplinary procedures, which then do not have to be imposed from without.
- brachycephaly.** A disproportionate shortness of the head.
- brain death.** Irreversible and permanent cessation of function of the entire brain.
- brain stem.** Older, more "primitive" part of the lower central mammalian brain responsible for organizing fundamental emotions related to fear, hunger, sex, protective devices and temperature control, emotionality, arousal, sleep, heart and breathing rates, water retention, pressure and volume as well as possibly the ratio of carbon dioxide to oxygen.
- bride price.** A substantial gift of goods or money given to the bride's kin by the groom or his kin at or before the marriage. Also called **bride wealth**.
- bridewealth (or bride wealth).** See **bride price**.
- cancer.** Group of more than 100 diseases that are characterized by the uncontrolled abnormal growth of cells.
- cardiovascular diseases.** Any of the diseases of the heart and blood vessels.
- cargo cult.** Religious movement in which there is preparation for an expectation of a future state of happiness brought about by the arrival of large amounts of material goods (cargo).
- carrying capacity.** The maximum population size that can be supported in a particular environment; to calculate the carrying capacity assumptions have to be made about the subsistence patterns and technology of a group of people.
- cash crops.** Crops grown primarily for sale.
- caste.** A ranked group, often associated with a certain occupation, in which membership is determined at birth and marriage is restricted to members of one's own caste.
- catharsis.** Gaining relief from emotional tension by venting feelings.
- cathartic method.** In psychoanalysis, refers to Freud's method of treatment in which patients were relieved from the tension of their emotional conflicts by recalling, putting into words and reexperiencing the affect associated with early traumatic memories.
- cerebral palsy.** Refers to a number of neurological disorders caused by damage to the brain early in life that affect motor control (symptoms are paralysis and spasms).

- cerebrovascular disease.** Narrowing or hardening of the blood vessels of the brain.
- Chagas' disease.** Causes damage to the heart and other organs, and often goes undetected until midlife, when damage to the heart and colon can cause fatal complications. The infection from the protozoan *Trypanosoma cruzi* is transmitted to humans by bloodsucking *reduviid*.
- chief.** A person who exercises authority, usually on behalf of a multicomunity political unit. This role is generally found in rank societies and is usually permanent and often hereditary.
- chiefdom.** A political unit, with a chief at its head, integrating more than one community but not necessarily the whole society or language group.
- Chinese medical system (or Han medicine).** A professional medical system originating thousands of years ago that emphasizes harmony and balance between humans and nature and between the systems of the body. Disease is defined in terms of imbalance which must be restored. The medical system is holistic in that in diagnosis and treatment everything about the patient must be considered; treatments are individualized.
- chiropractic.** A healing system based on the theory that diseases often result from a lack of normal nerve function. Chiropractic treatments include manipulation and specific adjustment of body structures, such as the spine, as well as physical therapy.
- cholera.** An acute intestinal infection with a short incubation period that produces an enterotoxin causing copious amounts of watery diarrhea. It is caused by the practically invisible bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. Cholera can quickly result in severe dehydration and death if left untreated.
- chromosomes.** Paired rod-shaped structures within a cell nucleus containing the genes that transmit traits from one generation to the next.
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.** A progressive disease commonly resulting from smoking; characterized by breathing difficulty, wheezing, and chronic cough.
- circumcision.** Male circumcision refers to a genital operation in which the fold of the skin covering the top of the penis is removed; in female circumcision the fold covering the clitoris, or all or part of the clitoris, or parts of the labia may be removed.
- cirrhosis.** A result of chronic liver disease in which scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue, thus blocking the flow of blood through the organ and preventing it from working as it should.
- clan.** A set of kin whose members believe themselves to be descended from a common ancestor or ancestress but cannot specify the links back to that founder; often designated by a totem. Also called a **sib**.
- clan exogamy.** A rule specifying that a person must marry outside his/her clan.
- class.** A category of persons who have about the same opportunity to obtain economic resources, power, and prestige.
- classificatory terms.** Kinship terms that merge or equate relatives who are genealogically distinct from one another; the same term is used for a number of different kin.
- class society.** A society containing social groups that have unequal access to economic resources, power, and prestige.
- cline.** The gradually increasing or decreasing frequency of a gene from one end of a region to another.
- clinical depression.** A more intense and long-lasting depression (e.g., for more than two weeks). There are usually a number of physical symptoms, which can include problems in sleeping, a loss of or great increase in appetite, and frequent fatigue or lack of energy.
- clitoridectomy.** See circumcision.
- chlamydia.** A sexually transmitted bacterial infection caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- cluster analysis.** Groups items together at increasing degrees of similarity in responses.
- complete dominance.** The key feature of the dominant mode is that a new mutation results immediately in a new phenotype in the heterozygote. In many cases, the subsequent homozygote is inviable.
- colonialism.** The control by one nation of a territory or people; the controlled territory may be referred to as a colony.
- colostrum.** A substance secreted from the breasts of human females for the first two or three days following birth. Although colostrum is not nutrient dense, it provides antibodies and other properties that enhance infant health during a particularly vulnerable period after birth.

co-parent. See **compadrazgo**.

co-sleeping. Refers to a diverse class of human-wide sleeping arrangements (e.g., mother-infant, husband-wife-children) wherein at least two or more persons sleep within proximity to permit each to detect, monitor, and exchange sensory stimuli.

commercialization. The increasing dependence on buying and selling, with money usually as the medium of exchange.

commodification. Turning something into a commodity that can be bought or sold.

compadrazgo. A fictive kinship relationship established primarily through baptism in which a child's sponsor becomes a "co-parent" and establishes a relationship with the child's parents as well as with the child.

concubinage. The custom of a socially recognized nonmarital sexual relationship between a man and a woman (concubine) who has lower status than the wife.

congenital. Referring to conditions that are present at birth (and that usually existed before birth).

consanguineal kin. One's biological relatives; relatives by birth.

contraceptives. Any of a class of methods or substances used to prevent conception.

cosmopolitan medicine. See **biomedicine**.

couvade. The classic couvade is when a man appears to experience labor during his wife's pregnancy; in milder forms a man may avoid certain types of work or rest during the pregnancy or labor.

Creole language. A language that develops under conditions where there are many different linguistic speakers needing to communicate. The most common cases are where colonial powers established commercial enterprises that relied on imported, often slave, labor. First a pidgin develops, which is usually a simplified version of the master's language, lacking many important elements of language. Creoles develop out of pidgins and are complex languages with distinct grammars different from the original languages.

crime. Violence not considered legitimate that occurs within a political unit.

cross-cousins. Children of siblings of the opposite sex. One's cross-cousins are father's sisters' children and mother's brothers' children.

critical medical anthropology. The perspective that emphasizes that social and political factors (e.g., poverty, social inequality, discrimination, structural violence, toxic work environments) are important elements in understanding and treating health and disease.

cross-sex identification. The psychological identification with the opposite sex (e.g., a boy who wishes to be like his mother).

cultural anthropology. The study of cultural variation and universals.

cultural competency. The expectation that medical professionals and bioethicists will understand and consider the cultural values and beliefs of all involved parties.

cultural ecology. The analysis of the relationship between a culture and its environment.

cultural relativism. The attitude that a society's customs and ideas should be viewed within the context of that society's problems and opportunities.

culture. The set of learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals that are characteristic of a particular society or population.

culture bound syndrome. A phrase used to describe behavioral syndromes unknown to mainstream psychiatry and denominated only by terms in local languages. There is considerable debate about whether such syndromes (e.g., *amuk* or *amok*, *latah*, "nerves") are that culture bound, suggesting that they may be somewhat different manifestations of more known illnesses.

cultural consensus analysis. Refers to both a theory and a mathematical model for estimating how much of a given domain of culture each individual informant 'knows' as well as estimating the 'correct' cultural response to each question that can be asked about the particular domain of culture under consideration.

cupping. A procedure that draws blood to the surface of the body by using a glass vessel evacuated by heat.

Darwinian medicine. The search for evolutionary explanations of vulnerabilities to disease. Also called **evolutionary medicine**.

- death.** Concepts vary across cultures and relate to how a culture defines the end of an individual's personhood; such concepts have varied over time and may even vary within cultures. (In the U.S. laws regarding definitions of death are established by individual states which define death as an event marked by the cessation of either respiratory, cardiac, or brain functioning.)
- demographic transition.** See **epidemiological transition**.
- demography.** The study of human populations, mostly using methods of quantitative analysis. Demographers may study such characteristics as the age-composition of populations, fertility, fecundity, and mortality.
- dengue fever.** Like malaria, dengue causes fever, headache and chills, as well as body pain and skin rash. Unlike malaria it is not recurrent, although persons who have had dengue are at elevated risk for the more serious forms of dengue hemorrhagic fever and dengue toxic shock syndrome.
- dependency theory.** Views "underdeveloped" or "developing" nations which have not yet had substantial economic growth as being the integral result of the processes by which other nations became "developed;" in other words, relations of dependency arose because of colonial, usually Western, powers.
- depression.** A mood state including feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and other negative feelings. Short-lived depression is normal. See **clinical depression**.
- descriptive term.** Kinship term used to refer to a genealogically distinct relative; a different term is used for each relative.
- descent rules.** See **rules of descent**.
- diabetes mellitus.** A group of metabolic diseases characterized by high blood sugar or hyperglycemia. A form of diabetes with onset in childhood is often called Type 1 diabetes; genetic factors play a major role and insulin deficiency is almost total. Type 2 or adult-onset diabetes is related to obesity.
- dialect.** A variety of a language spoken in a particular area or by a particular social group.
- diarrheal.** Disease characterized by a high number and frequent bowel movements with watery stool.
- disability.** From a relativist perspective, impairment-disability is a mapping of what a particular culture or subculture perceives as anomalous physical or behavioral differences. A more "etic" definition from the World Health Organization defines disabilities as "any restriction or lack resulting from an impairment of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."
- disease.** A biomedically measurable lesion or anatomical or physiological irregularity. Compare with **illness**.
- divination.** Getting the supernatural to provide guidance, usually through the use of magic.
- diviners.** Practitioners of divination.
- division of labor.** Rules and customary patterns specifying which kinds of work different kinds of people (e.g., by age, gender, caste) perform.
- DNA.** Deoxyribonucleic acid; a long two-stranded molecule in the genes that directs the makeup of an organism according to the instructions in its genetic code.
- dolichocephaly.** Having a disproportionately long head.
- domestic violence.** Physical aggression, often repetitive, by one or more members of the household against another member or members.
- dominant.** The allele of a gene pair that is always phenotypically expressed in the heterozygous form.
- Down's syndrome.** A congenital disorder caused by an extra chromosome on the chromosome 21 pair. Often associated with congenital heart defects, mental retardation; individuals usually have a broad, short skull, broad fingers with short digits and up-slanted eyes.
- double descent.** A system that affiliates an individual with a group of matrilineal kin for some purposes and with a group of patrilineal kin for other purposes. Also called **double unilineal descent**.
- dowry.** A substantial transfer of goods or money from the bride's family to the bride.
- drug.** Generally is a substance that affects the functioning of living things; with regard to medicine it refers to any substance used as a medicine; in lay parlance drugs are often thought of as substances (sometimes illegal) that

lead to addiction or altered states of consciousness. Although drugs are usually thought of as not foods, certain foods (drug foods) can have pharmacological properties.

dysentery. Any of a number of disorders that involves inflammation of the intestines, often accompanied by pain in the abdomen and frequent bowel movements.

ecology. The field of study concerned with the inter-relationships between organisms and their environments which together constitute the ecosystem.

ecosystems. All the interrelationships between the organisms and the physical environment in a particular geographical space.

egalitarian society. A society in which all persons of a given age-sex category have equal access to economic resources, power, and prestige.

ego. In the reckoning of kinship, the reference point or focal person.

emetic. A substance that causes vomiting.

emic. From the perspective of the insider; often referring to the point of view of the society studied; contrast with **etic**.

enculturation. See **socialization**.

endemic disease. A disease that has been prevalent in an area over long periods of time.

endogamy. The rule specifying marriage to a person within one's own group (kin, caste, community).

enteric. Relates to the intestines.

endocannibalism. Cannibalism practiced with deceased members of one's own group.

epidemic disease. A disease that currently has very high prevalence. (Implies large fluctuation over time.) Compare with **endemic disease**.

epidemiological transition. Can refer to a number of demographic transitions (such as when humans became food producers) but usually refers to the more recent transition which includes lowering of infant mortality, longer birth spacing, and the lengthening of life expectancy in recent times. Also called **demographic transition**.

epidemiology. Involves the use of population-based statistical methods of data collection and analysis to elucidate and predict the patterns of development and distribution (including associated causal factors) and potential control of disease across and within populations.

epilepsy. A chronic neurological disorder that is characterized by sudden and recurrent seizures and convulsions due to disturbance of the electrical activity in the brain.

episiotomy. A surgical incision of the vagina to widen the birth outlet.

ethnicity. The process of defining ethnicity usually involves a group of people emphasizing common origins and language, shared history, and selected aspects of cultural difference such as a difference in religion. Since different groups are doing the perceiving, ethnic identities often vary with whether one is inside or outside the group.

ethnic group. A social group perceived by insiders or outsiders to share a culture or a group that emphasizes its cultural or social separateness.

ethnocentric. Refers to judgment of other cultures solely in terms of one's own culture.

ethnocentrism. The attitude that other societies' customs and ideas can be judged in the context of one's own culture.

ethnographer. A person who spends some time living with, interviewing, and observing a group of people so that he or she can describe their customs.

ethnography. A description of a society's customary behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes.

ethnology. The study of how and why recent cultures differ and are similar.

ethnomedicine. The health-related beliefs, knowledge, and practices of a cultural group.

evil eye. The belief prevalent in many cultures that a person can cause harm to another by a look. To ward off the evil eye, many people try not to make the person suspected of having the evil eye jealous.

ethnonym. An alternative name for a culture or ethnic group.

ethnopharmacology. The system of knowledge of medicines (their preparation, uses, and therapeutic effects) in a cultural system.

- ethnopharmacopoeia.** The medicines (often plant-based) and their known effects (therapeutic effects, appropriate situations for use, etc.) of a culture.
- ethnophysiology.** The systems of knowledge in a culture relating to how organisms function.
- ethos.** The dominant assumptions or sentiments of a culture.
- etic.** From the perspective of the outsider; often refers to the way a researcher will classify something in the culture studied based on her or his own scholarly perspective; allows comparison since etic categories are presumably applicable to all cultures.
- etiology.** The causes of a disease or illness.
- eugenics.** The belief or practice that seeks to improve a human population by discouraging or forcing those with perceived undesirable heritable traits to reproduce less or not at all (negative eugenics) and/or by encouraging or forcing those with perceived desirable heritable traits to reproduce more (positive eugenics).
- evolutionary medicine.** See **Darwinian medicine.**
- exogamy.** The rule specifying marriage to a person from outside one's own group (kin or community).
- exorcist.** A person who expels spirits (usually demons) from possessed people.
- explanation.** An answer to a why question. In science, there are two kinds of explanation that researchers try to achieve: associations and theories.
- extended family.** A family consisting of two or more single-parent, monogamous, polygynous, or polyandrous families linked by a blood tie.
- extensive cultivation.** A type of horticulture in which the land is worked for short periods and then left to regenerate for some years before being used again. Also called **shifting cultivation.**
- family.** A social and economic unit consisting minimally of a parent and a child.
- fecundity.** The biological capacity to have offspring; fecundity varies by individual and also by population. May be affected by breastfeeding, caloric intake, strenuous exercise, among other factors.
- filariasis.** A disease caused by a parasitic nematode worm that blocks the lymphatic system resulting in the swelling and thickening of the skin and tissues below the skin, particularly the leg, arm, or genitals.
- female genital cutting (female genital mutilation).** Usually refers to a societally mandated genital operation that removes some part of the female genitalia or alters the genitalia. See **circumcision** and **infibulation.**
- fertility rate.** Provides an indication, usually for comparative purposes, of the number of live births per standard unit of population; the total fertility rate is the average total number of live births a woman in a particular population is expected to have within her reproductive years.
- feuding.** A state of recurring hostility between families or groups of kin, usually motivated by a desire to avenge an offense against a member of the group.
- fieldwork.** Firsthand experience with the people being studied and the usual means by which anthropological information is obtained. Regardless of other methods (e.g., censuses, surveys) that anthropologists may use, fieldwork usually involves participant-observation for an extended period of time, often a year or more. See **participant-observation.**
- folklore.** Includes all the myths, legends, folktales, ballads, riddles, proverbs, and superstitions of a cultural group. Generally, folklore is transmitted orally, but it may also be written.
- food collection.** All forms of subsistence technology in which food-getting is dependent on naturally occurring resources—wild plants and animals.
- food production.** The form of subsistence technology in which food-getting is dependent on the cultivation and domestication of plants and animals.
- foragers.** People who subsist on the collection of naturally occurring plants and animals. Also referred to as **hunter-gatherers.**
- forensic anthropology.** The use of anthropology to help solve crimes.
- fossils.** The hardened remains or impressions of plants and animals that lived in the past.
- founder effect.** A variety of genetic drift that occurs when a small group migrates to a relatively isolated location. A gene that is either present or absent in that small group by chance is likely to become characteristic of the future population.

- fraternal polyandry.** The marriage of a woman to two or more brothers at the same time.
- G6PD deficiency.** A red blood cell deficiency that can result in acute hemolytic crisis, often provoked by eating fava beans.
- gastrointestinal diseases.** Any disease involving the stomach and/or intestines.
- gender.** Two or more classes of persons who are believed to be different from each other; society has different roles and expectations for different genders (most societies have two genders—male and female—but others have more than two).
- gender differences.** Differences between females and males that reflect cultural expectations and experiences.
- gender division of labor.** Rules and customary patterns specifying which kinds of work the respective genders perform.
- gender roles.** Roles that are culturally assigned to genders.
- gender status.** The importance, rights, power, and authority of a particular gender.
- gender stratification.** The degree of unequal access by the different genders to prestige, authority, power, rights, and economic resources.
- gene.** Chemical unit of heredity.
- genetic disease.** Any condition caused or influenced by a malfunctioning gene or cytogenetic (chromosome) error that affects an organism's capacity for adaptation. Excepting lethal defects and sterility, genetic diseases display certain familial modes of inheritance and exhibit morbidity and mortality patterns that may compromise direct fitness.
- genetic isolate.** A population that hardly ever interbreeds with others; usually has distinctive genetic features.
- genetics.** The study of heredity and genes.
- genitor.** The biological father.
- genome.** The total set of genes carried by an individual or cell.
- genomic imprinting.** Also known as parental imprinting in which the expression of genes depends on whether the chromosome of concern is maternal or paternal in origin.
- genotype.** The total complement of inherited traits or genes of an organism.
- gestational diabetes.** A form of diabetes that occurs in pregnancy and is usually temporary.
- geophagy.** The practice of eating earth (e.g., clay).
- ghosts.** Supernatural beings who were once human; the souls of dead people.
- globalization.** The massive flow of goods, people, information and capital across huge areas of the earth's surface.
- gods.** Supernatural beings of nonhuman origin who are named personalities; often anthropomorphic.
- goiter.** Enlargement of the thyroid gland.
- gonorrhea.** A mostly sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*; it is marked by pain in the male urethra.
- Greek medical system.** A professional medical system that originated in Greece and spread throughout Europe and to parts of the Islamic world. Stemmed from Hippocrates and assumed that there were four "humors" (blood, yellow and black bile, and phlegm) that must be kept in balance. These humors have hot and cold and wet and dry properties.
- group marriage.** Marriage in which more than one man is married to more than one woman at the same time; not customary in any known human society.
- group selection.** Natural selection of group characteristics.
- guardian spirit.** A supernatural spirit that guides a person in important activities or decisions; the spirit may come to a person in a dream or the person may undertake a vision quest to find his or her guardian spirit.
- hallucination.** A perception of objects or events that does not come from an external source.
- headman.** A person who holds a powerless but symbolically unifying position in a community within an egalitarian society; may exercise influence but has no power to impose sanctions.
- healing.** A complex process that starts with a patient's experience of something being wrong and proceeds to some form of diagnosis and then possibly treatment. Cultural ideas and practices are fundamental in the healing process and societies vary enormously in the ways that the healing process proceeds.

- health.** A broad construct, consisting of physical, psychological, and social well being, including role functionality.
- hegemony.** The political and economic dominance one entity or group (e.g., state, nation, ruling class) has over others.
- hemoglobin.** A complex oxygen-carrying protein in red blood cells.
- hepatitis.** Inflammation of the liver. An infectious or viral form of hepatitis can be spread through contact. Symptoms are similar to influenza.
- herbalist.** A specialist skilled in the knowledge of medicinal plants.
- hermeneutics.** In contemporary anthropology involves the study of symbol systems to try to understand how people construct and interpret reality; emphasizes the subjective nature of the ethnographic enterprise.
- hernia.** The protrusion of tissue or organ through an abnormal opening.
- heterozygous.** If the two genes, or alleles, for a trait differ, the organism is heterozygous for that trait.
- historical archaeology.** A specialty within archaeology that studies the material remains of recent peoples who left written records.
- HIV.** Human immunodeficiency virus believed to cause AIDS. HIV destroys or impairs cells of the immune system, notably CD4+ T cells. HIV infection is usually acquired through sexual contact with an infected partner and also by contaminated injection equipment. Persons with HIV may not show any clinical symptoms for a long time and may not know they are infected. See **AIDS**.
- homeopathic medicine.** “Homeopathic” derives from the Greek *homoios*—“similar or like treatment” and *pathos* (suffering, disease). In this model, medicines produce symptoms similar to the illnesses that they are intended to treat.
- Homo sapiens.*** All living people belong to one biological species, *Homo sapiens*, which means that all human populations on earth can successfully interbreed. The first *Homo sapiens* may have emerged 100,000 years ago.
- homosexuality.** Defined broadly as sexual relationships between people of the same sex; however, cultures differ widely in the ways they define and treat these relationships and the people who engage in them.
- homozygous.** If two genes or alleles for a trait are the same, the organism is homozygous for that trait.
- hookworm.** An intestinal infection commonly caused by the parasite *Necator americanus*; can cause diarrhea, anemia and anorexia.
- horticulture.** Plant cultivation carried out with relatively simple tools and methods; nature is allowed to replace nutrients in the soil, in the absence of permanently cultivated fields.
- hot/cold health systems.** See **humoral medicine**.
- human paleontology.** See **paleoanthropology**.
- human genome project.** A worldwide project to determine the DNA sequences in all human DNA.
- human variation.** The study of how and why contemporary human populations vary biologically.
- humoral medicine.** A variety of medical systems based on the belief that a balanced state assures health, while an excess or deficiency yields illness. The balance needs to be maintained between various humors (see **humors**) and/or between elements such as “heat” and “cold.” Deducing the etiology of an illness points the way to appropriate therapy through the application of the “principle of opposites:” for example, illness caused by cold is treated with hot therapies, and vice versa.
- humors (humours).** One of a number of vital elements in the body (usually fluids). The various humoral medical systems had different numbers of basic humors.
- hunter-gatherers.** People who collect food from naturally occurring resources, that is, wild plants, animals, and fish. The phrase “hunter-gatherers” minimizes sometimes heavy dependence on fishing. Also referred to as **foragers**.
- hydropathy.** The treatment of diseases with the copious and frequent use of pure water.
- hypotheses.** Predictions, which may be derived from theories, about how variables are related.
- hypercholesterolemia.** One of the genetic forms of coronary heart disease that manifests in the 4th or 5th decade of life. Genetically deficient low-density lipoprotein (LDL) protein receptors (LDLRs) in the liver cause LDL cholesterol to accumulate in the blood, resulting in high blood cholesterol, atherosclerosis and heart disease.
- hyperglycemia.** Too high a level of glucose in the blood.
- hypoglycemia.** An abnormally diminished concentration of glucose in the blood.

- hypertension.** Persistent high blood pressure (the force that the blood moving through the arteries exerts on the arterial walls).
- hypertriglyceridemia.** Elevation of triglycerides in the bloodstream.
- hypoxia.** A condition of oxygen deficiency that often occurs at high altitudes.
- hysteria.** A condition (often considered a neurosis) marked by excitability and other emotional outbursts with disturbances of sensory and motor functions.
- iatrogenic.** Introduced inadvertently by medical treatment or medical procedures.
- illness.** The culturally structured, personal experience of being unwell which entails the experience of suffering. "Illness" can refer to a variety of conditions cross-culturally. In some cultures, it is limited to somatic experiences; in others it includes mental dysfunction; in others it includes suffering due to misfortune, too.
- immunization.** The process by which disease resistance is acquired. It may occur in an organism naturally when the organism produces its own antibodies in response to a pathogen or it may occur artificially with a vaccine.
- incest taboo.** Prohibition of sexual intercourse or marriage between mother and son, father and daughter, and brother and sister. May be extended to other relatives.
- incidence.** Most commonly a ratio of new cases of a disease or condition for a standard population size (e.g., per 100,000 in a given year) in a particular population. Compare with Prevalence.
- incomplete dominance ("co-dominance").** The key features of this dominant mode are that a new mutation results in a new phenotype in the heterozygote, and its phenotype is intermediate between the two homozygotes. A familiar human example is the wavy-haired heterozygous offspring of straight- and curly-haired homozygous parents. The A and B alleles in the ABO blood groups interact in a codominant fashion.
- individual selection.** Natural selection of individual characteristics.
- infant mortality.** See **mortality**.
- infanticide.** The practice of killing newborn babies; in many cultures it is not considered a crime and is generally practiced when the parents say that they do not have the resources to rear the baby.
- infectious disease.** Any of a number of diseases that results from a microorganism.
- infibulation.** Female genital surgery that involves stitching together the vulva leaving only a small opening for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. Usually done following circumcision. See **circumcision**.
- influenza (flu).** An acute viral infection involving the respiratory tract. It is also characterized by headache, aches, and fever.
- initiation ceremony (or rite).** A ceremony which marks the passage of an individual from one status to another. Male initiation ceremonies are often required of all boys in a society and mark the transition from boyhood to manhood. In societies with age-sets, initiation ceremonies may mark a series of transitions to different stages of life. Male initiation ceremonies often involve trauma such as hazing, genital operations, or tests of manliness. Female initiation ceremonies, which commonly occur after the onset of menstruation, are usually for one individual at a time.
- intensive agriculture.** Food production characterized by the permanent cultivation of fields and made possible by the use of the plow, draft animals or machines, fertilizers, irrigation, water-storage techniques, and other complex agricultural techniques.
- in vitro fertilization.** Fertilization that occurs in a laboratory.
- IQ.** An abbreviation for intelligence quotient. An intelligence quotient is a numerical measure based on a standardized test designed to measure intelligence. Among the many criticisms of IQ tests are that they are generally culture bound and therefore not good measures of intelligence for people of cultures and subcultures other than for which the test was designed.
- IUD.** Abbreviation for intra-uterine device. A contraceptive that is placed within the uterus for the purpose of preventing conception.
- jaundice.** Yellowing of the skin and eyes by bilirubin, a bile pigment, often because of a liver problem. Neonatal jaundice sometimes occurs in newborns.
- joint family.** A type of extended family with at least two married siblings in the same generation; can also contain parents.

- karma.** The doctrine that life is but one in a chain of lives and that it is determined by actions in a previous life. Past acts in previous lives can influence not only the future life but also the time in between lives.
- kindred.** A bilateral set of close relatives.
- kula ring.** A ceremonial exchange of valued shell ornaments in the Trobriand Islands, in which white shell arm-bands are traded around the islands in a counterclockwise direction and red shell necklaces are traded clockwise.
- kuru.** A chronic, progressive, uniformly fatal transmissible neurodegenerative disease now known to be caused by a prion. It is named from the Fore word meaning to shiver, shake, or tremble.
- kwashiorkor.** An extreme form of protein-energy malnutrition.
- language family.** A group of related languages that are presumed to descend from the same ancestral language.
- latah.** An emotional disorder fairly common, especially among low ranking women, in Malay populations. The affected person seems to satirize traditional manners and to mimic the words and gestures of others with whom they are interacting.
- leprosy.** A disease caused by the *Mycobacterium leprae*; it is characterized by lesions of the skin and superficial nerves. The extremities may become deformed and eroded.
- levirate.** A custom whereby a man is obliged to marry his brother's widow.
- libidinal.** Erotic in the broad sense defined by Freud, including pleasure.
- life expectancy.** The average number of years people might be expected to live in a particular population. It is based on the ages of death over a period of time. Populations with high infant mortality may have low life expectancies because of a large number of deaths at young ages; such populations might still have many people living to older ages.
- liminality.** Can refer to any transitional or in-between state, but usually refers to the transitional state in a rite of passage where an individual lacks status and prescribed codes of conduct.
- lineage.** A set of kin whose members trace descent from a common ancestor through known links.
- longhouse.** A multifamily dwelling with a rectilinear floorplan.
- maidenhood.** Refers to the customary period of time from the onset of puberty to marriage.
- mal de ojo.** See **evil eye**.
- magic.** The performance of certain rituals that are believed to compel the supernatural powers to act in particular ways.
- maladaptive customs.** Customs that diminish the chances of survival and reproduction in a particular environment. Usually applied to biological evolution, the term is often used by cultural anthropologists to refer to behavioral or cultural traits that are likely to disappear because they diminish reproductive success.
- malaria.** A set of diseases caused by various species of *Plasmodium* protozoans that are transmitted to humans from the bite of the *Anopheles* mosquito.
- malnutrition.** Deficient levels of intakes of specific nutrients.
- mana.** A supernatural, impersonal force that inhabits certain objects or people and is believed to confer success and/or strength.
- manumission.** The granting of freedom to a slave.
- market or commercial exchange.** Transactions in which the "prices" are subject to supply and demand, whether or not the transactions occur in a marketplace.
- marriage.** A socially approved sexual and economic union usually between a man and a woman that is presumed by both the couple and others to be more or less permanent, and that subsumes reciprocal rights and obligations between the two spouses and between spouses and their future children.
- matriarchy.** An old general term for the disproportionate holding of power or authority by females; since there are many domains of authority and power, anthropologists now generally identify more specific institutions or customs such as the presence of matrilineal descent, matrilineal residence, the proportion of leaders or heads of household that are female, inheritance by females, etc.
- matriclan.** A clan tracing descent through the female line.
- matrilateral.** Pertaining to the mother's side of the family, as in matrilateral cross-cousins or matrilateral parallel cousins.

- matrilineage.** A kin group whose members trace descent through known links in the female line from a common female ancestor.
- matrilineal descent.** The rule of descent that affiliates an individual with kin of both sexes related to him or her through women only.
- matrilocal residence.** A pattern of residence in which a married couple lives with or near the wife's parents. Often referred to as uxorilocal residence in the absence of matrilineal descent.
- measles.** An acute viral infection caused by a Morbillivirus in the paramyxovirus family. Later symptoms involve a red rash that spreads from the face.
- mediation.** The process by which a third party tries to bring about a settlement in the absence of formal authority to force a settlement.
- medical anthropology.** A branch of anthropology that studies all aspects of health-related phenomena (health, illness, and health care); considers cultural systems as well as the effects of local and worldwide social and political environments.
- medical ecology.** Studies health and disease in environmental context. Central to the model is the concept of ecosystem. See **ecosystem**.
- medical hegemony.** The process by which the assumptions, concepts, and values of ruling classes or powers come to permeate medical diagnosis and treatment.
- medicalization.** The process of making something "medical." In other words, the extension of biomedicine into non-biomedical realms (e.g., pregnancy, birth, menopause, exercising).
- medical pluralism.** In contrast to indigenous societies, which tend to exhibit a more-or-less coherent medical system, state or complex societies have an array of medical systems—a phenomenon generally referred to by medical anthropologists, as well as medical sociologists and medical geographers, as medical pluralism.
- medium.** Part-time religious practitioner who is asked to heal and divine while in a trance.
- meiosis.** The process by which reproductive cells are formed. In this process of division, the number of chromosomes in the newly formed cells is reduced by half, so that when fertilization occurs the resulting organism has the normal number of chromosomes appropriate to its species.
- menarche.** The onset of menstruation.
- menstrual seclusion.** A mandated time that women must avoid all or some others (e.g., men) during their menstruation. Seclusion is often in a special menstrual hut or house.
- menstrual taboos.** Proscriptions about what women may or may not do during menstruation (e.g., must stay in a menstrual hut or avoid cooking for others); rules may also apply to men (e.g., they may not have sex with their wives during menstruation).
- mental disorder.** The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders definition is a "clinically significant ... syndrome or pattern" in which an individual exhibits behavioral or psychological patterns that are associated with "distress, disability, or increased risk of pain or death;" anthropologists have pointed out a number of problems applying this definition cross-culturally. For example, many cultures do not clearly distinguish between mental and physical disorders.
- mental illness.** See **mental disorder**.
- mental retardation.** Definitions of mental retardation need to consider the context of the individual's culture and their peers in that culture. In the United States, mental retardation is often defined as a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior.
- mesaticephalic.** Having a medium-length head.
- mestizo.** A person of mixed European and Native American heritage; this term is usually used in Latin America.
- microevolution.** Small scale evolutionary change within populations or species.
- midwife.** A specialist to assist at birth.
- mitochondrial DNA.** See **mtDNA**.
- mitochondrial inheritance.** The inheritance of a trait encoded in the mtDNA.
- mitosis.** Cellular reproduction or growth involving the duplication of chromosomal pairs.

- moiety.** A unilineal descent group in a society that is divided into two such maximal groups; there may be smaller unilineal descent groups as well.
- monogamy.** Marriage between only one man and only one woman at a time.
- monogenic.** Controlled by only one gene.
- monolingual.** Using or knowing only one language.
- monotheistic.** Believing that there is only one high god and that all other supernatural beings are subordinate to, or are alternative manifestations of, this supreme being.
- morbidity.** The proportion of sickness or a specific disease in a population.
- mortality rate.** Provides an indication, usually for comparative purposes, of the death rate in a population; may be expressed as the number of deaths per 100,000 population in a given year; may be more specifically addressed to specific age ranges such as the infant mortality rate (e.g., number of infant deaths/1000 live births).
- moxibustion.** A medical practice that originated in China. Traditionally, small cones of dried leaves are burned on certain designated points of the body, generally the same points as those used in acupuncture. The term comes from the name of the wormwood plant most frequently used, *Artemisia moxa*. It is believed that burning or heating certain points on the body increased circulation “full-bloodedness” and relieved pain. Nowadays the heated material tends to be held above, not on, the body.
- mtDNA (mitochondrial DNA).** Extranuclear DNA found in the mitochondria. Mitochondria are responsible for certain oxidative metabolic functions that store and release energy. Children (both males and females) inherit **mtDNA** from their mothers only.
- mumps.** An acute infectious virus affecting the parotid glands, salivary glands in front and below the ear.
- multidimensional scaling.** Provides a visual representation in which items responded to in similar ways are placed closer together in the scaling plot.
- mutation.** A change in the DNA sequence, producing an altered gene.
- natal home.** Where a person was born and (usually) grew up.
- nationalism.** A sense of consciousness that exalts one nation-state and seeks to promote that nation’s values, culture, and interests above those of others.
- natural fertility.** Populations whose fertility patterns are not influenced to any great extent by deliberate limitation of family size are referred to as natural fertility populations; their family size and spacing is a function of the biological capacities of individuals to reproduce (fecundity).
- natural selection.** The outcome of processes that affect the frequencies of traits in a particular environment. Traits that enhance survival and reproductive success increase in frequency over time.
- naturalistic medical systems.** Sickness is explained by impersonal forces or conditions, including cold, heat, and other forces that upset the body’s balance.
- naturopathy.** A treatment system that avoids drugs and surgery and emphasizes natural means (e.g., air, sunshine, water) and physical manipulation and exercise to invigorate the body and improve health.
- negotiation.** The process by which the parties to a dispute try to resolve it themselves.
- neolocal residence.** A pattern of residence whereby a married couple lives separately, and usually at some distance, from the kin of both spouses.
- nephritis.** Inflammation of the kidneys.
- “nerves” (*nervios, nervos, nevra, worriation*).** A widespread label for similar experiences in various cultures in which patients complain of headache, dizziness, fatigue, weakness, and abdominal pain and attribute their symptoms to sadness, anger, fear, or worry.
- nervios.** The Spanish for “nerves.” See “**nerves**.”
- neurasthenia.** A disorder that is characterized by fatigue, lack of motivation, feelings of inadequacy, and psychosomatic symptoms.
- neurofibromatosis.** Genetic disorders of two types: the first is characterized by pale brown spots on the skin and soft benign, but sometimes disfiguring, tumors usually at nerve endings in the skin; the second is marked by tumors of the central nervous system and the acoustic nerve which can result in deafness.

- neurological disease.** A disease pertaining to the nerve tissue in the body (including the brain, brain stem, spinal cord, and ganglia).
- neurosis.** A form of mental distress which causes moderate to severe perturbation to relationships and ability to adapt, but not to the extent of being subject to delusions. Compare with **psychosis**.
- New World syndrome.** A collection of metabolic disorders characterized by diabetes, obesity, high blood lipids, gallstones and gallbladder cancer, resulted from a combination of founder effect and selective pressures encountered in harsh arctic environments by the first New World immigrant populations.
- norms.** Standards or rules about acceptable behavior in a society. The importance of a norm usually can be judged by how members of a society respond when the norm is violated.
- nuclear family.** A family consisting of a married couple and their young children.
- nosology.** The knowledge of and the classification of diseases.
- nutritional anthropology.** A subfield of medical anthropology in which nutritional implications of food intake, food as carrier of nutrients, nutritional status, human growth and health are the focus. Studies in nutritional anthropology draw on theories and methods from both biological and social sciences.
- oath.** The act of calling upon a deity to bear witness to the truth of what one says.
- obesity.** A state of excess accumulation of fat on the body. Cultures differ in the degree to which fat is valued; most biomedical practitioners have standardized measures for assessing degree of fat.
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).** A neurotic disorder in which a person becomes trapped in a pattern of repetitive thoughts and behaviors that are senseless and distressing but extremely difficult for the person to ignore. Usually accompanied by compulsions to repeat repetitive acts (e.g., washing hands). May if untreated interfere seriously with daily functioning.
- oedipal period.** The time, according to Freudian theory, when a child develops an Oedipal complex, which refers to sexual attraction to the opposite sex parent and feelings of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. Such feelings are normally repressed when the child fears the anger of the opposite sex parent. May commonly occur between 3 to 6 years of age.
- onchocerciasis.** Although the common name for onchocerciasis is river blindness, this form of the disease is less common than onchocercal skin disease, a disorder characterized by lesions and depigmentation.
- ontology.** The study of being or existence.
- opportunistic infections.** Infection with HIV is an example of an opportunistic infection because it weakens the immune system to the point that it has difficulty fighting off certain infections. These types of infections are called "opportunistic" infections because they take the opportunity a weakened immune system gives to cause illness.
- ordeal.** A means of determining guilt or innocence by submitting the accused to dangerous or painful tests believed to be under supernatural control.
- paleoanthropology.** The study of the emergence of humans and their later physical evolution. Also called **human paleontology**.
- osteopathy.** A profession that emphasizes the relationship between the muscle/skeletal structure of the body and organ function. Osteopathic physicians are skilled in recognizing and correcting structural problems through manipulation and other treatments.
- pandemics.** Epidemics that occur over a wide geographic area.
- paradigm.** A general concept or model accepted by an intellectual community as a effective way of explaining phenomena.
- participant-observation.** Living among the people being studied—observing, questioning, and (when possible) taking part in the important events of the group. Writing or otherwise recording notes on observations, questions asked and answered, and things to check out later are parts of participant-observation.
- pastoralism.** A form of subsistence technology in which food-getting is based directly or indirectly on the maintenance of domesticated animals.
- pater.** The socially defined father. Compare with **genitor**.
- pathogen.** Any disease-producing agent.

- pathogenic.** Causing or capable of causing disease.
- pathogenicity.** The ability of a parasite to inflict damage on the host.
- pathophysiology.** Referring to the unfolding and sometimes complex process by which an otherwise healthy biological system, partially or wholly, either slowly or instantaneously, breaks down or somehow fails to serve its intended function, potentially harming or killing the organism.
- patriarchy.** An old general term for the disproportionate holding of power or authority by males; since there are many domains of authority and power, anthropologists now generally identify more specific institutions or customs such as the presence of patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, the proportion of leaders who are male, inheritance by males, etc.
- patriclan.** A clan tracing descent through the male line.
- patrilineage.** A kin group whose members trace descent through known links in the male line from a common male ancestor.
- patrilineal descent.** The rule of descent that affiliates an individual with kin of both sexes related to him or her through men only.
- patrilocal residence.** A pattern of residence in which a married couple lives with or near the husband's parents. Often referred to as virilocal residence in the absence of patrilineal descent.
- peasants.** Rural people who produce food for their own subsistence but who must also contribute or sell their surpluses to others (in towns and cities) who do not produce their own food.
- penetrance.** The frequency of expression of a certain phenotype; some alleles, even when present, are expressed less than 100% of the time, and thus are said to have a lowered penetrance.
- personalistic medical system.** Disease and misfortune are viewed as being caused by super-sensory or supernatural agents (usually anthropomorphic) intentionally directed toward afflicted individuals in acts initiated by humans (e.g., using sorcery) or by the super-sensory agents directly. Accident and chance are not involved. Compare with **naturalistic medical systems**.
- personality.** The distinctive way an individual thinks, feels, and behaves.
- pharmacogenetics.** The convergence of pharmacology and genetics that deals with genetically determined reactions to drugs.
- pharmacology.** The study of drugs (their preparation, uses, and therapeutic effects). The term is usually used to refer to the scientific study of drugs associated with Biomedicine. Compare with **ethnopharmacology**.
- phenocopy.** An environmentally produced phenotype that simulates the effect of a particular genotype.
- phenomenology.** The investigation, as free as possible from preconceptions, of phenomena as experienced by people. With reference to health and illness, phenomenology may, for example, examine people's experiences and feelings about their own bodies, healing, and dying.
- phenotype.** The observable physical appearance of an organism, which may or may not reflect its genotype or total genetic constitution.
- phratry.** A unilineal descent group composed of a number of supposedly related clans (sibs).
- physical (biological) anthropology.** See **biological (physical) anthropology**.
- pidgin.** See **Creole language** for explanation.
- plague.** In the broadest sense can be any epidemic disease that causes high mortality.
- pneumonia.** Inflammation of the lungs with congestion.
- political ecology.** An ecological approach that considers economic, social and political factors.
- political economy.** The study of how external forces, particularly powerful state societies, explain the way a society changes and adapts.
- pollution.** A set of beliefs and ideas that suggest that a category of persons (e.g., women; a certain caste) may be dangerous to one's health. Often pollution ideas are associated with particular states, such as menstruating women.
- polyandry.** The marriage of one woman to more than one man at a time.
- polydactyly.** Having more than the usual number of digits (fingers and toes).

- polygamy.** Plural marriage; marriage to more than one spouse simultaneously.
- polygenic.** Disorders caused by the combined action of alleles from more than one gene.
- polygyny.** The marriage of one man to more than one woman at a time.
- polymorphism.** In genetics the regular occurrence in a breeding population of two or more forms of an allele of a gene; the frequency of the rarer allele cannot be explained by mutation alone and may be explained by greater adaptive fitness of the heterozygote condition (as in balanced polymorphism).
- polytheistic.** Recognizing many gods, none of whom is believed to be superordinate.
- possession.** A state where one's normal personality is replaced or controlled by another, usually by a spirit or other supernatural being.
- possession trance.** Alterations or discontinuity in consciousness, awareness or personality or other aspects of psychological functioning which are accounted for by the belief that the person is changed through the presence in him or her by a spirit entity or power.
- postpartum.** After birth.
- postpartum abstinence or postpartum sex taboo.** Prohibition of sexual intercourse between a couple for a period of time after the birth of their child.
- postpartum amenorrhea.** The suppression of ovulation (and menses) after the birth of a baby.
- potlatch.** A feast among Pacific Northwest Native Americans at which great quantities of food and goods are given to the guests in order to gain prestige for the host(s).
- practicing anthropology.** See **applied anthropology**.
- prader-Willi syndrome.** Neurogenetic condition characterized by mental impairment, obesity, small hands and feet, and lack of sexual maturity. Exhibits evidence for genomic imprinting; PWS is caused by a small deletion on chromosome 15, and is transmitted paternally.
- prehistory.** The time before written records.
- prestation.** Any thing (material things, services, entertainment) given freely or in obligation as a gift or in exchange; more broadly refers to the total context of the exchange.
- prevalence.** The percentage of a population that is afflicted with a particular disease or rate (number per standard unit of measure). If a disease lasts 10 years on average the prevalence will be 10 times higher than the incidence. Compare with **incidence**.
- priest.** Generally a full-time specialist, with very high status, who is thought to be able to relate to superior or high gods beyond the ordinary person's access or control. A woman priest may be referred to as a priestess.
- primary health care.** Focuses on providing information and facilities to aid in preventative health care; medical anthropologists often try to encourage grassroots health care programs that integrate traditional medicine with biomedicine.
- primate.** A member of the mammalian order primates, divided into the two suborders of prosimians and anthropoids.
- primatologists.** Persons who study primates.
- primogeniture.** The rule or custom by which the first-born inherits all or most of the property or titles.
- prion.** A protein particle lacking nucleic acid that is thought to be the cause of various infectious diseases of the nervous system.
- prone.** Lying face downward.
- proteomics.** The study of gene expression and how proteins are assembled and modified by both RNAs and other proteins (including prions).
- psychiatry.** A medical specialization dealing with mental illness, nowadays generally emphasizing drug treatment, but in the past more concerned with classification and psychotherapeutic methods.
- psychoanalysis.** A type of treatment for mental disorders developed by Freud which emphasizes listening to and understanding the patient's communications, especially dreams, and helping the patient to interpret them. Traditionally used mainly to treat neurosis, it is now used effectively for psychosis as well.
- psychotherapy.** Treatment of mental disorder (neurosis or psychosis) using talking in a personal relationship. It may include psychoanalytic treatment or it may use more directive methods such as steering the patient's attention toward certain problems.

- psychosis.** A distressed state in which a person is subject to delusions and often hears voices; in crisis it incapacitates a person from usual activities and disrupts relationships.
- psychosomatic.** Referring to a physical disorder or symptom that is influenced by the mind or emotional factors.
- pulmonary fibrosis.** Chronic inflammation with progressive formation of fibrous tissue in the alveolar walls of the lung; results in progressively increasing shortness of breath.
- pardah.** (Lit. veil or curtain), the practice, including the seclusion of women from public observation, of wearing concealing clothing, and use of screens or curtains to hide women.
- race.** In biology, race refers to a subpopulation or variety of a species that differs somewhat in gene frequencies from other varieties of the species. All members of a species can interbreed and produce viable offspring. Many anthropologists do not think that the concept of “race” is usefully applied to humans because humans do not fall into geographic populations that can be easily distinguished in terms of different sets of biological or physical traits. Thus, “race” in humans is largely a culturally assigned category.
- racism.** The belief that some “races” are inferior to others.
- raiding.** A short-term use of force, generally planned and organized, to realize a limited objective.
- random sample.** A sample in which all cases selected have had an equal chance to be included.
- rank society.** A society that does not have any unequal access to economic resources or power, but with social groups that have unequal access to status positions and prestige.
- recessive.** An allele phenotypically suppressed in the heterozygous form and expressed only in the homozygous form.
- reciprocity.** Giving and taking (not politically arranged) without the use of money.
- recombinant DNA.** Formed by the splicing of DNA from more than one source.
- rectal prolapse.** Protrusion of the rectal mucous membrane through the anus.
- redistribution.** The accumulation of goods (or labor) by a particular person or in a particular place and their subsequent distribution.
- reflexology.** Uses massage and pressure techniques to relax and loosen muscles in the feet and hands. The feet and hands are viewed as maps of the body; putting pressure on and massaging specific points on the feet or hands is said to have an effect on the corresponding area of the body.
- religion.** Any set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices pertaining to supernatural power, whether that power rests in forces, gods, spirits, ghosts, or demons.
- renal.** Pertaining to the kidney.
- reproductive ecology.** The study of how human reproduction is affected by ecological factors such as seasonal variability in food, environmental carrying capacity, and the production roles and spatial distribution in work.
- respiratory disease.** A disease that affects the organs involved in breathing (nose, throat, larynx, trachea, bronchi, and lungs).
- revitalization movement.** A religious movement intended to save a culture by infusing it with a new purpose and life.
- rheumatoid arthritis.** A chronic inflammatory disease that destroys joints. May be an auto-immune disorder.
- rickets.** A condition caused by deficiency of vitamin D which disturbs normal hardening of the bones.
- rite.** A ceremonial act or series of actions.
- rite of passage.** A ritual associated with a change of status; see **initiation rite**.
- ritual.** A ceremony, usually formal, with a prescribed or customary form.
- Sahel.** The transitional semi-arid zone in Africa between the arid Sahara to the north and the humid savannas to the south. It stretches from Senegal to the Sudan. It has become increasingly desertified.
- scabies.** A contagious inflammation of the skin caused by the itch mite.
- scarification.** The practice of producing raised scars on the body, usually for marking status (e.g., a tribal marking, achievement of manhood) or for decorative purposes.
- scarpie.** A neurological degenerative disease of sheep and goats that may be a prion disease.
- section.** A group of kin related to one another by both matrilineal and patrilineal principles; excluded are those related by only one principle as well as those not related by either principle. Associated with moieties and moiety exogamy.

- schizophrenia.** A severe mental disorder that most frequently begins in late adolescence or early adulthood and is characterized by delusions (fixed, false ideas), hallucinations (either auditory or visual), and behavior that is deemed socially inappropriate (e.g., going without clothes, lack of attention to personal hygiene).
- scientific medicine.** See **biomedicine**.
- sedentarization.** The process of become sedentary or settling into permanent communities.
- segmentary lineage system.** A hierarchy of more and more inclusive lineages; usually functions only in conflict situations.
- senescence.** The state or process of becoming old.
- septicemia.** Blood poisoning by microorganisms or their toxins.
- SES.** Socioeconomic status.
- sex differences.** The typical differences between females and males that are most likely due to biological differences.
- sexual division of labor.** See **gender division of labor**.
- sexually dimorphic.** Refers to a species in which males differ markedly from females in size and appearance.
- shaman.** A religious intermediary, usually part time, whose primary function is to cure people through sacred songs, pantomime, and other means; sometimes called witch doctor by Westerners.
- shamanism.** A religion characterized by the importance of the shaman as the intermediary between people and their gods and spirits.
- shifting cultivation.** See extensive cultivation.
- sib.** See **clan**.
- siblings.** A person's brothers and sisters.
- sickle cell anemia (sicklemia).** A condition in which red blood cells assume a crescent (sickle) shape when deprived of oxygen, instead of the normal (disk) shape. The sickle-shaped red blood cells do not move through the body as readily as normal cells, and thus cause damage to the heart, lungs, brain, and other vital organs.
- sickness.** For some, sickness is defined primarily as a social category describing the sick role in society and the way a person who is ill is expected to behave; sickness may also be used to describe illness and/or disease when the distinction is not important. See **illness** and **disease**.
- SIDS.** See **sudden infant death syndrome**.
- slash-and-burn.** A form of shifting cultivation in which the natural vegetation is cut down and burned off. The cleared ground is used for a short time and then left to regenerate.
- slaves.** A class of persons who do not own their own labor or the products thereof.
- sleep architecture.** Refers to the time, duration and order by which sleep stages or awakenings and arousals are expressed throughout an organism's sleep behavior.
- sleeping sickness.** See **trypanosomiasis**.
- smallpox.** An acute viral disease characterized by a widespread rash with pustules. Considered to be eradicated but previously caused high mortality.
- socialization.** A term used to describe the development, through the direct and indirect influence of parents and others, of children's patterns of behavior (and attitudes and values) that conform to cultural expectations.
- social stratification.** The presence of unequal access to important advantages depending on the social group one belongs to. See **class** and **caste**.
- society.** A group of people who occupy a particular territory and speak a common language not generally understood by neighboring peoples. By this definition, societies do not necessarily correspond to nations.
- sociobiology.** See **behavioral ecology**.
- sociology.** A discipline that focuses on understanding social relations, social groups, and social institutions. Usually focuses on complex societies.
- sorcery.** The use of certain materials to invoke supernatural powers to harm people.
- sororal polygyny.** The marriage of a man to two or more sisters at the same time.
- sororate.** A custom whereby a woman is obliged to marry her deceased sister's husband.

- soul flight (or soul journey).** A trance state in which some aspect of the experient (soul, spirit, an animal familiar) interacts with spirits in a non-ordinary reality. The soul journey or flight is a universal feature of shamanism.
- soul loss.** An injury to the core or essence of one's being or personal identity. The loss may be characterized by despair, disharmony, and feelings of loss of meaning in life and connection with others. "Soul" constitutes a vital essence of self-emotions. Soul loss occurs from trauma that causes an aspect of one's self to dissociate. Reintegration of these dissociated aspects of self is central to healing. Soul recovery usually involves the help of a shaman.
- species.** A population that consists of organisms able to interbreed and produce viable and fertile offspring.
- spirits.** Unnamed supernatural beings of nonhuman origin who are beneath the gods in prestige and often closer to the people; may be helpful, mischievous, or evil.
- state.** A political unit with centralized decision making affecting a large population. Most states have cities with public buildings; full-time craft and religious specialists; an "official" art style; a hierarchical social structure topped by an elite class; and a governmental monopoly on the legitimate use of force to implement policies.
- statistical association.** A relationship or correlation between two or more variables that is unlikely to be due to chance.
- statistically significant.** Refers to a result that would occur very rarely by chance. The result (and stronger ones) would occur fewer than 5 times out of 100 by chance.
- stereotype.** A mental picture or attitude that is an oversimplified opinion or a prejudiced attitude.
- STDs.** Sexually transmitted diseases.
- structural violence.** The set of large-scale social forces, such as racism, sexism, political violence, poverty and other social inequalities, which are rooted in historical and economic process.
- stunting.** Process which substantially reduces size or vigor. With reference to child growth often assumed to occur if a child is more than 2 or 3 standard deviations below normal height and weight for its age. (The term wasting may be used to refer to weight and the term stunting with regard to height.)
- subculture.** The shared customs of a subgroup within a society.
- subsistence patterns.** The methods humans use to procure food.
- sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS, cot or crib death).** The sudden death of a young infant or child which is unexpected by history and in which a thorough post-mortem examination fails to demonstrate an adequate cause of death.
- supernatural.** Believed to be not human or not subject to the laws of nature.
- supine.** Lying with back downward.
- susto.** The Spanish word "susto" means "fright" or "fear." The basic idea in *susto* is that either a sudden shock as in being startled, or an emotional shock, or a series of traumatic events, or a frightening encounter with a ghost have damaged a person, often by startling their soul out of their body. Susto patients are described as restless during sleep, listless, depressed, debilitated and indifferent to food and hygiene.
- swidden.** The name used for a plot under extensive cultivation; see **extensive cultivation**.
- syphilis.** A sexually transmitted disease caused by the spirochete *Treponema pallidum*.
- syncretism.** The combination of different forms of belief or practice; usually refers to the blending of elements from different religions as a result of contact.
- syndemics.** Refers to two or more epidemics (i.e., notable increases in the rate of specific diseases in a population), interacting synergistically with each other inside human bodies and contributing, as a result of their interaction, to excess burden of disease in a population; in other words health-related problems cluster by person, place or time. Also refers to the health consequences of the biological interactions among co-present diseases. Also points to the determinant importance of social conditions in disease interactions and consequences.
- systemic lupus erythematosus.** An autoimmune disorder that causes chronic inflammation of different organs of the body.
- taboo (tabu, tapu, kapu).** A prohibition or restriction that, if violated, is often believed to bring supernatural punishment.
- tapu.** See **taboo**.

- taxonomy.** An orderly classification.
- technology.** In the broadest sense is the application of knowledge for the purpose of changing, manipulating, or controlling the natural and human worlds. Technology includes tools, artifacts, constructions, machines, prostheses, and skills.
- tetanus.** An acute infectious and often fatal disease caused by an anaerobic bacterium (*Clostridium tetani*) that often enters the body through wounds in the skin.
- thalassemia.** A serious disease characterized by severe anemia starting at a few months of age, distinctive deformities of the facial bones and enlarged spleens.
- theories.** Explanations of associations or laws.
- thrifty genotype.** A genotype that presumably makes a person's metabolism very efficient enabling one to get by on fewer food resources; such a genotype is theorized to have evolved with frequent famine or food stress. In the presence of "nutrition-rich" environments may be prone to diseases such as diabetes.
- time allocation study.** A study that systematically measures the time that people spend in various activities.
- totem.** A plant or animal associated with a clan (sib) as a means of group identification; may have other special significance for the group.
- totipotent.** Cells that retain the potential to form any specialized cell type in the body.
- trachoma.** A chronic infectious disease of the eye (in the conjunctiva and the cornea) that often results in blindness.
- trance.** See **altered state of consciousness**. Trances believed to be the result of spirit possession are called possession trances. See **possession trance**.
- transhumant.** Seasonal movement of livestock to different pastures.
- transnationalism.** A broad term referring to the extension of activities beyond national boundaries. Economic and political relationships today are often transnational. With respect to migration, there is today an enormous movement of people back and forth between national boundaries who often maintain ties with both their host and homeland communities and with others in a global community.
- tribal organization.** The kind of political organization in which local communities mostly act autonomously but there are kin groups (such as clans) or associations (such as age-sets) that can temporarily integrate a number of local groups into a larger unit.
- tribe.** A territorial population in which there are kin or nonkin groups with representatives in a number of local groups.
- trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness).** An endemic disease among people and animals in Africa. It is caused by various kinds of trypanosome protozoa. It is transmitted by the tsetse fly. Involvement of the central nervous system produces profound lethargy.
- tuberculosis.** An infection caused by a *Mycobacterium* species (*tubercle bacillus*) that may affect almost any tissue, but especially the lungs.
- typhoid.** An infectious disease with fever that is caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi* usually spread in contaminated food or water.
- Unani (Unnani) medical system.** The professional medicine of the Middle East which derived originally from Greek Classical medicine and later added elements from Islamic physicians. Has a strong focus on energy or the life force and four vital humors. It is a holistic medical system with a strong emphasis on balance.
- unilineal descent.** Affiliation with a group of kin through descent links of one sex only.
- unilocal residence.** A pattern of residence (patrilocal, matrilocal, or avunculocal) that specifies just one set of relatives that the married couple lives with or near.
- unisex association.** An association that restricts its membership to one sex, usually male.
- urbanization.** The process of becoming urbanized.
- uxorilocal residence.** See **matrilocal residence**.
- variable.** A thing or quantity that varies.
- vector.** A carrier of disease (e.g., an insect).
- venereal disease.** Now usually called sexually transmitted diseases. Any of a class of diseases that is usually or often transmitted by direct sexual contact (e.g., syphilis, AIDS).

vodou. See **voodoo.**

vodoun. See **voodoo.**

voodoo. A religion that focuses on contacting and appeasing spirits to help and protect people; voodoo attributes illness to angry ancestors. Many ceremonies focus on divination to find the cause of illness, rites of healing, propitiation of spirits in which offerings are given, and sacrifices to prevent future trouble. Voodoo is the major religion of Haiti. Also spelled **vodou** or **vodoun.**

warfare. Violence between political entities such as communities, districts, or nations.

western medicine. See **biomedicine.**

witchcraft. The practice of attempting to harm people by supernatural means, but through emotions and thought alone, not through the use of tangible objects.

woman-woman marriage. A type of marriage in which a woman takes on the legal and social roles of a father and husband. The marriage partner, a younger woman, has children with a male chosen by the female husband. The female husband is considered the father.

X-linked inheritance. The key feature of the X-linked mode is that males and females are affected disproportionately. X-linked genes are transmitted in either a monogenic dominant or recessive mode of inheritance. Females can be either homozygous or heterozygous for X-linked traits, whereas normal males are always hemizygous (having only one of a pair of genes) for loci located on the X chromosome.

yaws. An infectious contagious tropical disease caused by a spirochete (*Treponema pertenue*); it is characterized by ulcerating lesions which later affect bone—also called *frambesia*.

y-linked inheritance. The key feature of the Y-linked mode is that only males carry the gene. Y-linked inheritance is displayed by genes located on the nonrecombinant region of the Y chromosome. Normal females never possess a Y chromosome, and normal males are always hemizygous (have one of a pair of genes) for the Y chromosome.

zoonotic diseases. Diseases that come from animal reservoirs.