



EUROPHAMILI Interculturality and medicines 3rd April 2003

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Medicines and religious traditions

- ∞ **Study on prescriptions by Sylvie FAINZANG in Southern France**
- ∞ **186 interviews (74 Catholics, 53 protestants, 36 muslims, 18 jews) (Tradition)**
- ∞ **Different attitudes to medicines and prescriptions and doctors found between the groups studied**
- ∞ **Fainzang S. Médicaments et société, Le patient, le médecin et l'ordonnance, Paris :PUF, 2001**

Compliance /Adherence

- ⌚ **Different attitudes to the holy written word**
Protestants (bible) Muslims (Coran)
Catholics (restricted access)
- ⌚ **Hypothesis : better compliance/adherence**
of protestants : Unproven but....
- ⌚ **Catholics and muslims tend to hide their**
non-compliance
- ⌚ **Protestants may proudly proclaim that they**
choose not to comply

What do the patients do with their doctor's prescription ?

- ⌚ Prescriptions may be thrown away or kept for future use.
- ⌚ If kept by Catholics - to show to other doctors
- ⌚ Protestants may keep it to assist in self-medication
- ⌚ If they destroy prescriptions : they often copy them first.



Continued

- ⌚ **Protestants often burn their prescriptions....**
- ⌚ **Muslims hardly ever keep their prescriptions (It's like a bill)**
- ⌚ **They never burn them . But one patient put his prescription next to his heart....**



She also studied patient leaflets (notices)

- Ω **PILs are read more by protestants**
- Ω **less by catholics**
- Ω **Suggested explanation : catholics consider such writing can only be understood by experts of The scriptures can only be understood by the priest.**
- Ω **« Doctor knows best »**
- Ω **Muslims do not read PILs either**



Side effects

- **Catholics if they read the leaflet, tend to read the side effects section, not dosage, or therapeutic indications**
- **To know what unpleasant effects may occur and thus prepare themselves if and when the effects arise**
- **Protestants on the other hand to decide if and when they should stop taking the medicine .**



What do patients do with their medicines ?

- ⌚ **Protestants often keep them in the bedroom or study**
- ⌚ **Catholics often keep them in the kitchen or bathroom**
- ⌚ **Can you suggest an explanation ?**



What do patients do with their Medicines ?

- ⌚ **Catholics and muslims pay little attention to what they swallow... (Doctor knows best)**
- ⌚ **Protestants and Jews monitor their intake of medicines more closely**



Waste not want not

Ω **Catholics would like members of their family to benefit from medicines they themselves have taken....
Whereas protestants do not like wasting medicines (and may even finish her husbands or daughter's medicine....)**



Patients know best...

Ω **Protestants and Jews tend to practise more self-medication than Catholics and Muslims**



How they adjust the dose...

- ⌚ **Protestants tend to reduce the dose**
- ⌚ **Muslims and Catholics tend to increase them**
- ⌚ **Catholics often use the metaphore of a machine (They need filling up) as do their catholic doctors.**



Doctors and treatment

- ∩ **Catholics find it more difficult to adhere to a long term prescription for a chronic disease than protestants**
- ∩ **Protestants and Jews tend to try to negotiate and argue with their doctors about prescriptions**
- ∩ **Catholics tend to leave it up to the doctor**
- ∩ **Muslims have great respect for their doctor's authority**



Can you see a pattern emerging ?



Pattern

- Ω **Catholics (and Muslims) tend to submit to the doctors will.**
- Ω **Protestants tend to believe they have the right to adjust their treatment**
- Ω **Protestants tend to have a more individualistic and personal relationship with their medicines**
- Ω **Catholics a more collective attitude**

Possible hypothesis suggested by Sylvie Fainzang

- ∞ Catholics submit to their doctors in a similar way to the authority of their church and priests**
- ∞ Jews have a long tradition of discussion and argument with their Rabbis....**
- ∞ Protestants believe in the examination of their conscience (and the consultation of Scriptures)**
- ∞ These types of behaviour are mirrored in the way they deal with prescriptions, medicines and doctors**



French medicinal drug consumption

- ⌚ **The French take twice as many medicines as Germans**
- ⌚ **They also are the champion pill-poppers (psychotropic medicines) of the world. 20 % of all medicines**
- ⌚ **Attitude to generic drugs**