Introduction

- The purpose of this investigation is to understand the theory of health and medicine in the indigenous Amazonian perspective, and to reflect on what can be learned through their practices.
- Indigenous culture and ancestral knowledge recasts health and healing more holistically. What we see as "medical" can be found in many different aspects of their culture: in the environmental relationships they maintain, their social kinship with others, and the different daily practices they follow to achieve a state of "living well" (sumak kawsana).
- Today, our society is struggling with modernity and the health problems modern lifestyles cause. Technology has clearly provided unquestionable benefits, but it has brought about a range of new illnesses and conditions related to inactivity and overconsumption, as well as emotional problems like anxiety and stress.

Medicinal Plants

- There are a wide range of medicinal plants that are used to promote health:
  - This plant acts as an antibacterial for infections, epidermal wounds, and inflammation.
  - Ginger is used for inflammation, weakness, and eliminates pain. It's also used to eradicate parasites and amoebas within the body.
  - Guayusa is a staple plant in Ecuador. It is used as a tea, that provides energy, acts as an antioxidant, and is used for spiritual healing.

Ancestral Knowledge

- Indigenous Amazonian people strive to maintain the active and healthy lifestyles of their ancestors. They practice a very spiritual approach to health.
- They believe that life is an ongoing process that both processes of birth and death are an innate part of the human nature. To further add, they believe that health is an equilibrium. The state of wellness is based on a continuum.
- One of the problems of modernity is that scientific medicine is disrupting this equilibrium between life and death, and causing many unintended consequences. Many of our problems stem from the failed attempts to accept and understand the human condition.
- For Amazonians, every human being possesses a "life force," an energy; and our bodies are simply physical manifestations of this energy. This energy contains our soul, our thoughts, our character, and our values. The soul connects our physical bodies with our mentality.
- Rather than seeing our world literally, it's viewed in a spiritual sense, in order to gain a deeper understanding for it. This approach helps Amazonians enjoy the richness of life and allows them to feel related to all living things.

Environmental Influences

- To understand the human body and how it works is to also understand our surroundings and the environment.
- Amazonian people use abundant and accessible resources in their surrounding environment to promote wellness. In their eyes, nature is an extension of the self’s relatedness to others, as it provides the Amazonian people with a number of advantages: it offers food, housing, and even medicines (many of which have been adopted in modern, scientific medicine).
- Amazonian cultures see the rainforest as a “mother”; it holds maternal characteristics that provide nourishment and shelter for its people. As a result, nature is highly respected.
- The idea behind these environmental influences is to coexist with nature, rather than trying to control it. We have created such a technology-driven society that using computer screens and monitors seems to be the only way to study health, when this is not the case.
- We can use our surroundings that the environment has already provided for us to create a better understanding of our world and our health.

Social Relationships

- Kinship is one of the most important aspects of Amazonian-Ecuadorian culture. It is the model of good living and also is extended into the relationships with nature.
- For Amazonians, social wellness signifies the idea of having a close network of individuals, including a surrounding environment, that promote your well-being.
- For example, in the Amazonian context, many treatments are done at home. Modern doctors have learned and adopted this kind of practice, something that shamans have done for thousands of years. The patient remains in their familiar environment, making the treatment much more comfortable.
- The purpose of this type of treatment is to maintain a healthy mentality, to surround the patient with positive factors that will promote an optimistic outlook. Healing is not so much as a “business” as it is a service provided to the community and those in need.

Daily Life in Ecuador

- The president of the Sapo Rumi community, Frederico Calapucha, is teaching students about the historical significance behind various plants in the Amazonian rainforest.

Medicinal Plants

- These bottles are filled with liquid extract of various medicinal plants.

Cited Literature