

The effect of folk beliefs on the spread of diseases in Guilan during the Qajar era

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Abstract:

Background and Purpose: Like other parts of Iran, Guilan, was in poor health during the Qajar period. Numerous factors in the studied period led to the spread of various diseases in Guilan. In addition to having physical and mental adverse effect on the people of Guilan, these diseases caused significant changes in the composition of the population, economy and culture of this province, especially in the Qajar era. This study focuses on the effect of superstitious beliefs on the prevalence and spread of disease in this period; In addition to weakness of the health system and care facilities, superstitious beliefs were considered deterrent to public health. Aside from the deterring effects of superstitions on general health, these beliefs became a part of culture during this period, which added to deterioration of Guilan health during this period. This writing endeavors to answer the question of what effect beliefs and superstitions had on the spread of diseases in Guilan during the Qajar period?

Materials and Methods: The present study was conducted based on a library research method. Historical resources and travelogues of Europeans, as well as new researches were used to complete the topics.

Results: This study showed that, due to the conditions of the society at that time and the lack of progress in medical science and the inability and ignorance of people in dealing with various diseases and treatment methods, the tendency to use folk medicine to treat diseases has had a great prevalence and deterring effect on the spread of diseases in this period.

Conclusion: It seems that superstitions and false beliefs have been one of the reasons for the spread of infectious diseases in Guilan during the Qajar era.

Keywords: Beliefs, Health, Folklores

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