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Traditional Medicine in West Sumatra: Some General Features

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ABSTRACT The Minangkabau is one of the largest matrilineal societies in the world. In this study, the different healing traditions prevalent in Minangkabau are described briefly. By looking at the different healing methods, the researcher offers another perspective on this society. Many publications regarding the Minangkabau focused mainly on matters regarding the social structure. The primary objective of this study is to explore and illustrate the traditional Minangkabau healing methods in all its facets. The research method consisted of fieldwork which included observation and open-ended interviews with traditional healers. It was discovered that there are three main types of traditional healers: One who focuses on Islamic healing methods, one who considers various forms of healing and one who acts as a medium. After analysing all these healing methods, gender-specific components and three-fold healing elements were identified.