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Healing, Madness and Stigma: A Study of the Jaunsari Tribe of Lakhwar Village (Dehradun District, Garhwal, Uttarakhand)

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ABSTRACT The Jaunsari people are a tribal population residing in the Jaunsar-Bawar region of Garhwal, known for their unique culture of faith healing. A qualitative study was conducted in the Jaunsari village of Lakhwar to comprehend how *personalistic dos* (various forms of suffering and misfortunes caused by supernatural factors) are conceptualised, resulting in sociocultural perceptions towards madness, stigma and witchcraft. The research employed a phenomenology approach using snowball sampling to identify informants and conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews, resulting in primary data. The study indicates a strong belief in supernatural phenomena such as evil eye, magic and possession, with faith healers holding a position of respect in the village. While modern education and healthcare facilities have led to the coexistence of traditional healing practices and modern medicine, faith healers are still highly regarded. The community does not practise stigma or social boycotts against individuals deemed mad, possessed, or accused of witchcraft.