In the Pursuit of Healthcare

Choices in a Semi-Nomadic Community
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A Community of Overlapping Circles

- Renaissance Festivals have been in existence for over 30 years.
- Season runs from February thru November.
- Some artisans, entertainers, and vendors travel from fair to fair all season.
- Individual circuits overlap, cross over, and split apart, only to reunite later.
Some of the larger faires
HYPOThESIS:

• The greatest influence on health care choices in the rennie community is lack of income.

• Rennies would prefer to use the bio-medical system if it were more affordable.
Wrong

- Choices are more heavily influenced by the strong sense of community.
- Natural remedies are preferred over pharmaceuticals, even when availability is not an issue.
- Biomedical options sought in extreme circumstances.
Biomed as a Last Resort

• Biomed sought when surgery is needed.
• Some have insurance (such as through the VA), but predominantly uninsured.
• Point of honor to pay cash for care.
• RESCU arises from the efforts of the community to help members pay for outside biomedical health care.
• All volunteer non-profit organization.
• Fundraising rallies to raise funds.
• Medical advocacy volunteers negotiate with providers for reduced rates.
Case Study: Mario

- Treatment consisted of painkillers and reduced work duties.
- Mario felt frustrated with his perceived lack of progress under this treatment, and especially resented the pharmaceuticals prescribed.
Mario’s Solution

• On a subsequent visit to the doctor, Mario persuaded the doctor to recommend 3 days off work.
• Threw the prescription meds in the trash, and used a familiar combination of herbals, meditation, and massage.
• Back at work, with greatly reduced pain levels after 24 hours of his own regimen.
Mario’s Choice

- The biomedical treatment was free and easily accessible to Mario.
- The alternative treatment plan meant money out of pocket, as insurance would not cover it.
Summary

• Overall, most rennies believe that the active lifestyle, clean air of outdoor living, and the use of natural remedies is conducive to healthier living.

• Fictive kinship among rennies provides a supportive atmosphere and facilitates the sharing of remedies and treatments.

• Although natural remedies are preferred, the individual still has the ultimate choice in treatment, and help is available to pay for biomedical treatment when chosen.