

**Ronda's Disease and Its Treatment: An Ethnomedical Study of the Kaili People in Palu City****Rismawati<sup>1\*</sup>, Isbon Pageno<sup>2</sup>, Andi Saifah<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Department of Anthropology, Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia<sup>2</sup> Department of Public Administration, Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia<sup>3</sup> Department of Nursing, Universitas Tadulako, Palu, IndonesiaCorresponding Author Email: [rismawatiisbonp@gmail.com](mailto:rismawatiisbonp@gmail.com)

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**ABSTRACT**

Ronda disease is a dermatological condition that often infects humans, causing symptoms like itching, skin pain, and prolonged fever. The Kaili ethnic group considers this disease dangerous and potentially fatal if not treated promptly. This study aimed to explore the Kaili community's perception of Ronda Disease. A qualitative method with a life history approach was employed to examine the community's knowledge and experience in seeking treatment. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with five purposively sampled informants: three patients with current or past Ronda Disease, one Sando (shaman), and one Sando assistant involved in treatment. Study results indicated that Ronda Disease is not viewed as an ordinary illness but as deliberately 'sent' to cause suffering. Two interviewed patients initially believed they had common skin conditions like eczema or athlete's foot; despite repeated consultations with dermatologists over several months, their condition did not improve. Following consultation with a Sando and a traditional diagnosis, they were identified as having Ronda Disease. Traditional treatment therapy, involving herbal concoctions and bathing rituals, was administered until recovery. These findings suggest that the modern health system faced challenges in adequately addressing this specific condition within this cultural context. Integrating modern and traditional health systems appears crucial for creating synergy in managing diverse health issues, including culturally specific conditions like Ronda Disease

**Key Messages:**

- Within the Kaili ethnomedical framework, Ronda Disease is understood as a culturally specific, personalistic 'sent illness' (*Mbalasi*), requiring distinct diagnostic and therapeutic protocols administered by specialized traditional healers (Sando).
- The reported efficacy of traditional Sando treatment for Ronda Disease, contrasted with perceived limitations of conventional dermatological approaches in this context, highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and suggests exploring potential synergy between traditional healing systems and formal healthcare services.

## GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



## INTRODUCTION

The Kaili ethnic group is an indigenous population distributed across and inhabiting the areas of Palu City, Donggala Regency, Sigi Regency, Parigi Moutong Regency, Poso Regency, and Tojo Una-una Regency, along with surrounding areas of Central Sulawesi Province. As an ethnic group, the Kaili possess a rich culture that informs them of their lifestyle (1). Reflecting the importance of their culture, they maintain local knowledge passed down through generations, including knowledge regarding the treatment of diseases. The traditional treatment of diseases, known within anthropology as Ethnomedicine, is a sub-discipline of Health Anthropology focusing on the knowledge of ethnic groups in understanding and curing various diseases. Ethnomedicine encompasses beliefs and practices related to disease involving traditional healing practitioners (2).

Practitioners of traditional healing are known in the Kaili language as "Sando," which translates to "smart person" or someone possessing the knowledge and ability to treat diseases (3). Therefore, Sando practitioners are a significant source of support for the Kaili ethnic group when facing illness and disease. Sando can be classified based on their specific expertise and knowledge. Within the Kaili ethnic community, these traditional healers (Sando) are classified based on their specific expertise (4). The *Sando Mpoana* specializes in assisting with childbirth and providing care for mothers and infants. For physical ailments, the *Sando Koto Vuku* is adept at treating broken bones, while the *Sando Sala Uva* focuses on sprains, and the *Sando Mpo Onju* offers specialized massage services. Sando concentrates on particular conditions: the *Sando Nokhende* treats stomach acid issues, the *Sando Nakabungganga* addresses earaches, and the *Sando Dua Ngisi* handles toothaches. Further unique specializations include the *Sando Na Vu*, who assists with swallowed fish bones; the *Sando Na Mpuli*, skilled in removing foreign objects from the eye; and the *Sando Mpanjila*, who treats diseases using *Lida* (a specific plant or method). Additionally, the *Sando Nu Ngana* provides specialized care for babies and toddlers. Some practitioners possess broader expertise, such as the *Sando Mbaso*, who can treat various diseases. For conditions considered more serious or non-physical in nature, the *Sando Nubalia* addresses spiritual disorders, infertility, and other severe illnesses. Finally, specific to the focus of this study, the *Sando Nu Ronda* possesses the specialized knowledge required to treat Ronda Disease.

Exploring local wisdom in health is crucial. Sando's knowledge regarding disease treatment is an ancestral legacy passed down through generations (5). Consequently, it is considered taboo for a Sando to set a fixed rate for their services; gifts are typically given out of the patient's family's kindness as an expression of gratitude, consistent with Kaili cultural values. For the Kaili ethnic group, Ronda Disease is categorized as an unusual illness, known as *Mbalasi*, believed to originate from and be deliberately sent by someone to harm others due to motives such as hatred, envy, or jealousy (6). Superficially, Ronda Disease may appear ordinary, with initial symptoms including bumps resembling insect bites that enlarge, spread across the body, and are accompanied by fever. Over time, the skin rash typically reddens, may turn blackish, and causes intense itching that worsens with scratching. The Kaili ethnic group views Ronda Disease seriously; prompt consultation with a Sando is considered essential upon symptom onset, as delayed or incorrect action is believed to lead to prolonged suffering or death. Anecdotal evidence within the community suggests significant morbidity and potentially mortality associated with this condition, reinforcing the strong belief in its severity among the Kaili people and highlighting the importance of investigating local knowledge about it.

Disease represents a persistent challenge, potentially threatening human survival. It often receives greater attention when it interferes with social roles or becomes chronic and debilitating. An individual's reaction to disease is influenced by factors including knowledge, beliefs, disease severity, economic status, education, environment, and local traditions (7). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the Kaili community's perception of Ronda Disease, examining their knowledge and experience in seeking treatment for this condition.

## METHODS

This study was located in the city of Palu, chosen considering that many Kaili people in the city of Palu still believe that if they suffer from illness or disease, they will come to Sando to treat their illness. This study was conducted for six months from January 2023 to June 2023, involving five informants who were selected purposively, consisting of three patients who had and were suffering from Ronda disease, one Sando/shaman, and one Sando assistant who was involved in the treatment process, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Research Informants**

No.	Initial	Age	Gender	Job/Position
1.	PE	72 years	Male	Sando, an expert on Ronda disease
2.	TU	34 years	Female	Sando's assistant concocts a herbal medicine
3.	TN	70 years	Female	A patient who has recovered from Ronda
4.	YN	21 years	Female	A patient is undergoing treatment for Ronda disease
5.	AY	32 years	Female	Patient's family whose mother and father died from Ronda disease

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and observations. Interview topics included the knowledge of the Kaili people about diseases in general, Ronda disease, the etiology of the causes and symptoms of Ronda disease, and the healing process of the disease, plus stories of experiences of treating and suffering from Ronda disease. Observations were conducted in the patient's residential environment, the place of treatment (Sando's practice place), and places where wild plants were used as raw materials in treating diseases and the Disease Treatment Process, as well as observing the informant's condition after treatment.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively with a Life History approach, the aim being to obtain detailed data regarding the knowledge of the Kaili people about diseases, the etiology of the causes and symptoms of Ronda disease, and the healing process. Interpreting data and concluding. The Life History approach is a qualitative research method used primarily in anthropology, sociology, and related fields. It involves collecting detailed accounts of an individual's life experiences, usually focusing on the entirety or significant portions of their life, as narrated by the individual themselves. Research permits were issued by the Formal Institution and given to the local government where this research took place. The time and

place of the interview were adjusted together with the informant, considering their busyness and high mobility. The names of the informants in this study have been disguised.

## RESULTS

### Issues Regarding Ronda Disease

The experience of the three informants (Table 2) shows that the Ronda disease can be transmitted to someone through doti or black magic. Someone who sends the Ronda disease because they are hurt, jealous, envious, or feel rivaled. When someone is hurt, this is how to send doti to someone they hate. Doti does not recognize age and gender. Sometimes doti can also go astray, for example, doti is sent to the parents, but the one who gets the doti is their child, which often happens. Therefore, as social beings, we must guard our words and behavior so that no one gets hurt intentionally or unintentionally by our actions. Then the person goes to a shaman to send the disease to the person they do not like.

**Table 2 Informant Experiences When Suffering from Ronda Disease**

Informant	Experience
<b>Informant Tina I Naja (70 years old)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I once suffered from Ronda disease; at that time, my whole body felt itchy, and it came suddenly when it was approaching dusk. I observed my body was full of bumps like a mosquito had bitten me, it felt itchy, the more I scratched the itchier, the later it got the more itchy my body became, itchy and itchy, the itching got worse, because I could not stand the itching at around 9 pm I went to the clinic and complained about my condition to a dermatologist at a general hospital in Palu city, after observing the disease, the doctor then gave me a prescription to be taken at the pharmacy as an oral medicine with a dosage of 3 x 1 day for 3 consecutive days. After returning from the doctor, I was lying in bed.</li> <li>• At 24.00. Night, the itching disease became more itchy, red, and inflamed; the itching was extraordinary, my physical condition weakened, accompanied by fever. Feelings were getting more and more chaotic, covered in an extremely itchy feeling, the more I scratched, the worse it was, ouch... ouch... why is it so itchy? I then took the allergy medicine given by the doctor. After taking the doctor's medicine I started to feel better, but 3 hours later the itching came back, I cried my eyes out, my children were confused about what to say, then I was given more medicine from the doctor and it subsided, I fell asleep.</li> <li>• The next morning when I woke up, my skin was getting redder, blacker, thicker... wow this is something strange, usually if it's an allergy it would have healed after taking the doctor's medicine I thought, but this didn't get better. Then the family came to the house to visit while paying attention to the itching that I felt, one of my family members said that your illness is like Ronda, yes that's right, this is Ronda, so you have to go to Sando because only Sando can treat it.</li> <li>• The family then discussed visiting Sando, that day was Friday morning at 09.00. we went to Sando's house, let's call him Ina I Maya (the female Sando) when we arrived at Sando's house we waited outside on the terrace of Sando's house, about 15 minutes Sando came out and met us, invited us in and sat in the living room while asking what was wrong, then I immediately showed my itchy body, Sando observed the type of itch, and he said hii Ronda Vuri (this is black Ronda) not me, I'm not suitable, I don't treat this kind of thing, it has to be Sando mbaso hii, try komiu/let's meet PE, he is the right person to treat diseases like this and if it suits you, hopefully it can be cured, go there now, try asking people if I'm not mistaken his name is Sando PE, he lives in Bungi.</li> <li>• The family and patient rushed to the intended place while asking from house to house, until finally they met Sando PE's house, but unfortunately Sando was not at home. According to information from the family, Sando was treating a patient elsewhere. Then one of Sando's family members</li> </ul>

Informant	Experience
	<p>called Sando PE and said that there was a patient who came and wanted treatment and PE answered just wait 30 minutes for me to come there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When Sando PE arrived home he asked again, do you know who I can treat this disease, with a shy smile the patient's family said that we were given instructions by Sando Tina I Maya to meet Sando PE.</li> <li>• Long story short, the time was 11.00, Sando PE then asked if the patient had time to see a doctor? We answered, it had been from the doctor and until now he is still taking medicine, then Sando said to keep taking the medicine, let the doctor cure it from the inside because this disease has entered the inside, we try, hopefully it is compatible and a match. The family also asked for help with prayers.</li> <li>• <i>Sando</i> asked us to come back, and promised to come visit the house around 4 pm, Sure enough at 4 pm Om PE came riding his old motorbike, wearing a brown shirt, black trousers, with a black songko covering his hair. In between the cap, there was a cigarette that he had deliberately tucked away. Sando sat quietly with a serious expression observing the surroundings of our house. then looked at the patient and approached him, starting to examine the condition of the inflamed skin, while lighting a cigarette with his gas macis. while saying and asking to prepare a stick.</li> <li>• Apparently Sando wanted to divination (Bolshevik) diagnose the disease with a stick of stick, wanted to investigate whether the person who sent the stick was someone who lived close to the patient or not. And it turned out that according to Sando it was not someone near here but far away in another area. this doesn't need to be a fuss he concluded, I help as much as I can the only one who can cure the disease is above Allah SWT. Sando again asked the family to prepare water. Lots of it. Sando also took the water that had been prepared calmly, Sando recited the gane-gane and blew towards the water, then blew it onto the patient's body that was suffering from itching. After Sando returned, our mother felt calm, the itching was reduced, she fell asleep soundly, if she felt itchy, the water that had been rubbed on the itchy body.</li> <li>• The next day, Sando PE came back with a pack of special Ronda powder, to be rubbed all over the patient's body, the family was asked to routinely rub the powder on the itchy area repeatedly until it healed.</li> <li>• A week later, Sando PE came back with Balaroa leaves, the family was asked to prepare a large tray filled with water and a ladle for the patient to bathe. The family rushed to prepare everything, after that Sando put Tava Balaroa into the patient's bath water while reciting the gane-gane / matra-matra into the bath water. with a position facing north, because the source of the disease comes from the north. The patient was bathed by pouring water all over his body starting from the crown until the water wet the whole body.</li> <li>• After bathing, the patient was powdered all over his body again, and given water that had been mixed with gane-gane, the patient lay down in the room.</li> <li>• Sando walked to the front and sat in the living room while taking a deep breath, sitting quietly while saying God willing, the patient will recover soon. While reminding us to speak and act carefully because illness and disease can occur if someone feels disturbed by us because they have offended someone else, and the consequences are fatal and suffer from illness like this. Without saying much, Sando said goodbye and went home.</li> <li>• Three days later, the patient's condition began to recover, he was no longer itchy, he slept soundly, ate well and returned to his normal activities. By Sando the patient was declared cured, that means we are fated "mother" with a smile Sando conveyed all that. while saying goodbye and going home with a radiant face.</li> </ul>

Informant	Experience
<b>Informant II, YN (21 years old), about Ronda's illness that she is currently suffering from</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 232 1394 327">• The patient's family quickly gave a gift as an expression of gratitude and thanks to Sando PE. Sando also accepted the gift and expressed his thanks back to the family</li> <li data-bbox="507 327 1394 510">• I am a final semester student at a well-known university in the city of Palu, originally from South Sulawesi, my name is YN, currently I am suffering from an itchy disease, according to the Kaili people this is not an ordinary itch but "Ronda". Hearing the word Ronda, I felt strange because in my village there is no such disease, but I just heard about it, even though I don't really believe in the Ronda disease.</li> <li data-bbox="507 510 1394 853">• That afternoon before Maghrib, after taking a shower I lay down in the bedroom, my body was sore from being on campus all day. Not long after, my body and hands started to turn red, itchy, I thought this might be because I was bitten by a mosquito while in the bathroom, over time the bumps widened and itched even more. I rubbed wasp oil but it got even itchier and redder all over my body, coincidentally there was Herocyn powder I rubbed it all over my body but it got even itchier. Then I called my parents in the village. Ma' Pa' didn't know why my body was itchy, I've rubbed it all over but it still itched, uh it's getting itchier, come here first Ma' I complained. Hearing that night, my mother immediately rushed to Palu, worried about my condition.</li> <li data-bbox="507 853 1394 1447">• My condition was getting more restless because of the itching, my body started to feel hot, feverish, I then remembered my parents' message that in Palu I still had family from my father who happened to be a wife from Palu (Kaili) I looked for her contact number and contacted her, I told her about my illness. Finally my uncle rushed to the boarding house accompanied by his wife, when they arrived they took me to the doctor at around 10:00. after queuing for some time. The doctor gave me a prescription and filled it at the pharmacy following the instructions for taking it (2 types of medicine, one to be taken 3x1 a day, and the other 2x1 a day). After arriving at the boarding house I then ate and took the doctor's medicine then rested and went to sleep. Seeing me asleep, Uncle and Auntie said goodbye and went home and told me to always contact them. After Uncle and Auntie left, I fell into a deep sleep, perhaps because of the effects of the doctor's medicine. In the middle of the night I woke up from my sleep because my body felt hot, itchy, and itchier. Then I took the doctor's medicine again, slowly the itching reduced but only for a moment, not long after the itching came back and even worse, my skin was covered in bright red bumps, starting to turn black, very itchy... oh how is this, it feels so painful.</li> <li data-bbox="507 1447 1394 1883">• The next day I continued to consume the doctor's medicine according to the instructions but there was no change until the evening prayer. Apparently, my aunt secretly began to suspect that this disease was Ronda. So she took the initiative to take me to a shaman (Sando/Kaili) in Talise. I just followed my aunt's invitation, and when I arrived at my aunt's house, I was then invited to sit on the front porch, and she rushed to Sando's house to ask for help, then Sando came, Sando was still a young man, he observed the itchy disease and he asked me to lie down and also asked for water to be blown on him and then the water was rubbed all over the itchy body while rubbing it with a songko or cap that is usually used for prayer. My body was so weak that my legs were not strong enough to stand. After seeing my condition like that, Uncle, Aunt, and my aunt's family carried me to the car, Sando was invited to see the environment where I lived in my boarding house.</li> <li data-bbox="507 1883 1394 2040">• Upon arrival at the boarding house, I was asked to lie down, Sando started reading gane-gane and blowing it all over my body, at that time my uncle's wife's brother also joined me, I will call him Uncle AA, he also performed the ruqiah while reading the holy verses of the Qur'an... all means were taken... after a while later, the itching and redness began to subside, seeing</li> </ul>

Informant	Experience
<b>Informant 3. AY (30 years old) Ronda disease has taken the lives of my father and mother</b>	<p>that my condition had begun to calm down then Uncle and Auntie, Sando and Uncle AA said goodbye to go home. The next day my mother arrived in Palu, she also brought a potion from the village to be rubbed on all the itchy areas. And thank God... the itching, the heat had subsided, if it itched I rubbed water on my body, besides that Sando gave me a concoction of powder that was made for Ronda's disease to be applied all over my body at all times. While occasionally we came to Sando to continue to make the medicine. Sando said that at the end of the treatment, Sando would bathe me so that Ronda's disease would immediately go away forever through the bath water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let me introduce myself, my name is AY, I am the eldest of 4 siblings (two boys and two girls). The four of us grew up being raised by my mother's uncle and aunt. My mother's name is AT. My mother was very diligent in helping my father work in the Taluwa / family garden, if the corn harvest was the result was shared with the owner of the Talua (garden). According to the story, before we were entrusted to take care of the garden, there was another family who had taken care of the Talua first, but because they were not honest, the maintenance of the garden was handed over to us. Working in the Talua was very much enjoyed by my father and mother, because they both loved gardening, everything that was planted would grow healthily and fertile so that the results of the sale could be enjoyed.</li> <li>• Seeing the success of our parents' work, apparently caused feelings of envy, jealousy, and heartache for the family who also lived as neighbors close to the house. One day Toma I DN/DN's father, a close neighbor, came to our house to borrow a crowbar, but for some reason the crowbar was not there, so Toma I DN manjili/ came home without bringing a crowbar. Papa Dani felt that we had lied, so he did not give him a crowbar and this was the beginning of the black magic incident in our family.</li> <li>• After Toma I DN returned from our house, that Thursday before Maghrib my mother felt itchy all over her body, Ani, her son, gave her an antidote by drinking young coconut water that was picked next to their house, but it only subsided for a moment, not long after that large lumps appeared filled with water, if scratched the water flowed, the lumps widened, and grew in new places, until they filled my mother's entire body. Poor thing, we called Sando to treat her illness, but it also didn't get better, so my mother was taken to a dermatologist, she was treated in the hospital for a week but it also didn't bring any changes towards healing, even my mother's body was getting weaker, finally my mother returned home to be treated traditionally. Dad was very loyal to accompany mom during her illness, feeding her, carrying her everywhere, because my mother's body was wet with Ronda like a burn to the point where she slept on banana leaves. One time Sando who came to treat her told my father to take good care of his mother because her illness was a type of Ronda Becak aka Ronda Gege. If it only touches the skin it won't be transmitted but don't have sex with her because the illness will be transmitted. That was Sando's message to my father.</li> <li>• A week later suddenly my father's body was covered in lumps filled with water that were the same type as the illness my mother had, we then treated both parents with the same illness, both suffering from Ronda Gege. Three days later my mother died from Ronda Gege and a week after my mother's death, my father also left us forever, since then the Ronda Gege disease has been widely rumored in our neighborhood. I am increasingly convinced that the Ronda Gege disease was sent by someone in the form of doti aka black magic..</li> </ul>

### **Experience in Treating Ronda Disease**

Sando PE is a Sando/shaman who is an expert in treating Ronda disease, this healing knowledge was passed down from his great-grandmother. The title Sando PE is a title given to him by the community because he is considered a smart person, who has the ability to cure diseases. Initially he refused to be called Sando, because according to him the knowledge he had was only a gift from the Almighty through his great-grandmother. He started treating diseases at the age of 27, Sando PE was often asked by his grandmother to help treat patients who had Ronda disease, over time he was also reliable. One day at the age of 37, Sando PE's great-grandmother passed away, her estimated age was over 100 years. She died of an elderly illness. Since the passing of his great-grandmother, Sando PE began to treat patients himself. Until now, Sando PE is still trusted as Sando Ronda assisted by his assistant who is none other than his own cousin named Uni.

Sando PE has a wife and 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) from his three children, his second child, a 20-year-old son, has the same ability, but the attitude and behavior of the second child are contrary to the principles of healing that his father must inherit. The child considers his father's job as Sando Ronda to be a job that is contrary to Islamic teachings because in the healing process Sando PE uses gane-gane (Kaili), incantations (Bugis), and mantras (Java), therefore Sando PE is made restless by his child. Often quarrels with his child because the child has a different perspective in treating illnesses. The child is rarely at home, he prefers to go to the mosque and hang out with friends who are religious so that there are often arguments with his father.

Furthermore, according to Sando PE, treating this Ronda disease is not easy, because actually the Ronda disease is a disease sent by someone to a certain person with the intention of harming or hurting and making someone experience pain in the form of itching. One day there was a Bugis patient, let's call him Hj. Ida, came to Sando to ask for help because her skin disease had become inflamed, it had been going on for months but it had not healed, Hj ID had consumed various traditional herbs, had been treated by a skin specialist but still nothing, her disease was getting worse, initially Hj Ida's skin was clean white, but since suffering from Ronda disease her skin faded, turned black, dry and scaly, at night she had difficulty sleeping because of the extreme itching. Since her meeting with Sando PE, slowly but surely her Ronda disease has gradually improved within 3 (three) weeks. Alhamdulillah, now Hj ID is back to her normal activities, and occasionally comes to bring food or snacks to Sando PE as an expression of gratitude for being cured of the illness that had plagued her.

He has been treating Ronda disease for approximately 40 years, she has treated many patients. Sometimes there is a desire to quit the job, because the risk is great where he has to face opponents who are also smart people who have supernatural powers to harm others, so they have to compete in knowledge, whoever is weak will lose and can end in death. Patients who come to Sando PE are not always Kaili ethnicity, but from various ethnicities such as Bugis, Minahasa, Javanese, Sundanese, even a Bugis Palopo student has been treated and cured by Sando PE.

### **Ronda's disease and its characteristics**

Ronda disease is categorized as an unusual disease because it is considered dangerous. This disease is a disease of transmission or doti/black magic. The characteristics of this disease can be observed where the skin rash looks reddish, like a mosquito or ant bite, and continues to spread to the surrounding skin area. If left untreated, the skin condition will become increasingly inflamed, turning black, scaly, and dry, the itching will get worse, and the condition will worsen over time.

Figure 1 shows 3 types of patrols: Dry Patrol or Ngau Patrol, characterized by dry and scaly skin; Wet Patrol or Wet Patrol, characterized by watery skin, where the flowing water is where it itches.; Fire Patrol or Apu Patrol, characterized by itching, heat, and the skin turns black over time.





**Figure 1a. Wet Ronda**



**Figure 1b. Dry Ronda**



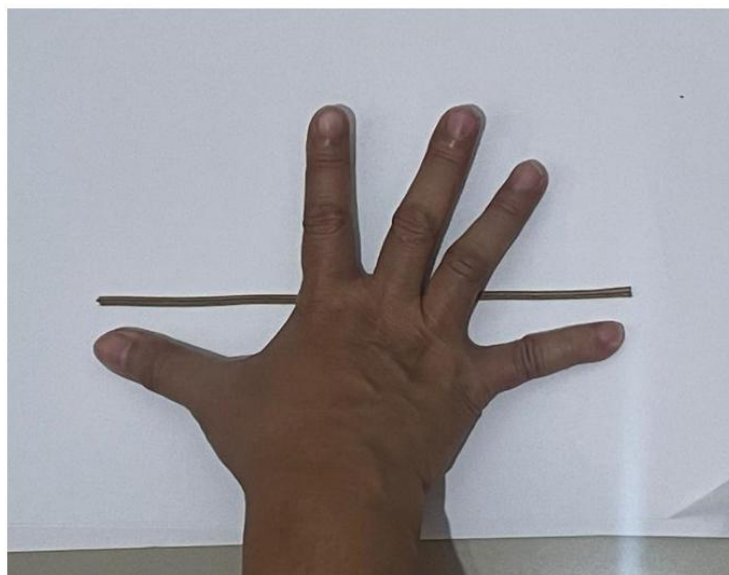
**Figure 1c. Ronda Apu ("Fire")**



**Figure 1d. Ronda Gege (Wet)**

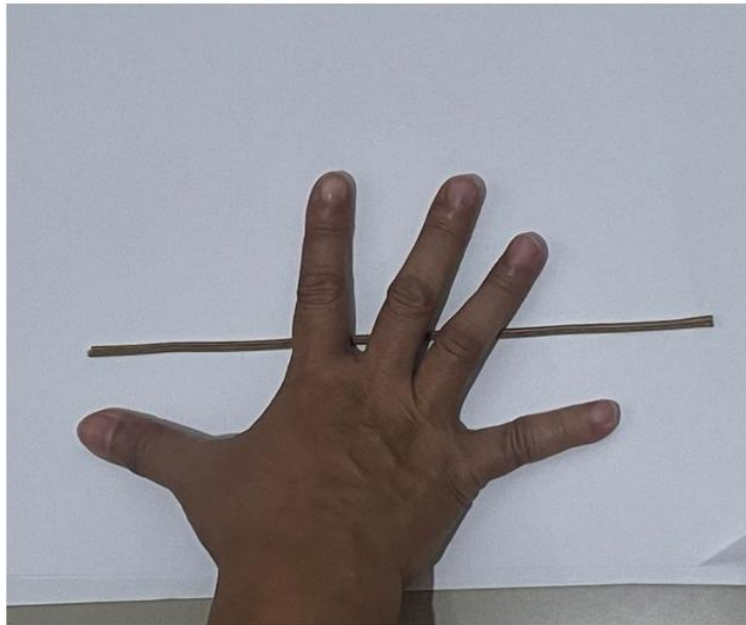
#### **Diagnosis of Ronda Disease with a Stick (Nyur Leaf)**

According to Sando PE, to find out whether this disease was sent by a close person or a distant neighbor, a traditional diagnosis was carried out using a stick made from a Nyiur leaf. When making a diagnosis, Sando PE prepared a stick, then the stick was measured from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger so that the length of the stick was the size of a span.



**Figure 2. The length of the stick is a span of the hand**

Then Sando recited the gane-gane (mantras) asking for guidance on where the disease came from, who sent it, the gane was recited over and over again, then the stick was measured again in the same way and strangely the results were different, the stick was longer than the previous measurement..



**Figure 3. The length of the stick is no longer the same as the previous size.**

This means that the *doti* or black magic that causes Ronda disease is sent by someone who is far from where the sufferer lives, then therapy is carried out to treat and cure the disease.

### **Therapy Treatment and Healing of Ronda Disease**

There are several steps taken by Sando in carrying out therapeutic treatment on patients with Ronda Disease, namely the first method, *Nitavuisi*, the second, *Nirera*, the third, *Nidiu*, and then *Nibada*. Therefore, the traditional healing practice of Ronda disease is carried out by a Sando (a shaman who has the ability to cure Ronda disease))

#### ***Nitavuisi* (blown)**

When Sando performs treatment, the first thing he does is *Nitavuisi* (blowing on the area that is considered sick by repeatedly reciting prayers/*gane-gane* towards the patient..

#### ***Nirera* (rubbed)**

The second step is for Sando to observe the disease and rub the disease with a *songko* or cap that is usually used for prayer and rub it on the sore area with the *songko* so that the itching that is felt gradually subsides..

#### ***Nidiu* (bathed)**

The third step is to bathe the patient in water that has been given *Balaroa* leaves, then the water is shaken with the position facing north, with the intention that the itching disease will immediately leave the patient's body and the patient will recover from the illness.

#### ***Nipovia Bada* (powdered all over the body)**

The fourth step that Sando does is *Nipoviaka Bada* / making cold powder, or *Nibada* (powdered). *Nibada* is the process of applying powder to the entire body which is applied directly by Sando while reciting *gane-gane* (holy mantras) to the patient's body. The making of this cold powder is done by Sando's assistant. Sando's assistant is usually a woman who can be Sando's wife or younger sister. Sando's assistant is the one who will prepare the cold powder which is mixed traditionally using natural raw materials in the form of forest plants, rice and *Kula* (ginger). After going through all the series of treatments, Sando will occasionally come to monitor the progress of the disease until it is cured, as a thank you the patient's family

usually hands over an envelope containing money as much as they can, cigarettes and amcis as a thank you to Sando and his family..

### **Ronda Powder (*Bada Nu Ronda*)**

Aunt Uni, familiarly called (name has been changed) by residents in her neighborhood in Bungi, Kelurahan Baru, she learned to make powder from Sando PE. According to Aunt Uni, to make Bada Ronda, the raw materials consist of three types, namely Rice, Balaroa Leaves and Red Ginger. The three ingredients are washed clean and pounded using a mortar made of coconut wood, with a ratio of 1 kilo of rice, 1/2 kilo of red ginger and a bunch of Tava Balaroa. The pounding process is carried out by Aunt Uni, after the three ingredients are pounded until smooth, then dried in the hot sun. After drying, the powder is ready to use. Sometimes the raw materials for powder are easy to find and sometimes they are difficult to find. Like Tava Balaroa which is used as the main ingredient for making powder. These leaves are not always available in places where they are usually found, so Aunt Uni has to go around looking for them in the bushes where the plant is thought to be. The Balaroa plant is a shrub, which creeps, can be found on riverbanks, on the edges of forests and bushes. When using Ronda powder, the patient must first mix it with water that has been mixed by Sando so that the Ronda powder can be more effective and heal quickly.



Figure 4a. Mortar and pestle for pounding



Figure 4b. *Ose Paekoyo* (Regular rice)/Paddy



Figure 4c. *Tava Balaroa*/Paliasa Leaf



Figure 4d. *Kula Lei* / Red ginger



## DISCUSSION

Scientifically, disease is defined as a physiological disorder of an organism as a result of infection or environmental stress, disease is objective. On the other hand, illness is an individual's assessment of the experience of suffering from the disease (8). In the personalistic medical system, disease is caused by the intervention of an active agent that can be a supernatural being or a human (9). While disease in the Naturalistic system is explained in terms of a systemic that is not personal. Naturalistic medical illness recognizes the existence of a balance model; disease can occur if the balance of fixed elements in the body is disturbed (10).

The pattern of healing diseases that are considered common is done independently at home by consuming pakuli/traditional herbal medicine, or buying medicine at the nearest shops, at the pharmacy, or visiting a modern medical health clinic. Usually in a short time the disease can then be overcome and cured. On the other hand, unusual illness or Mbalasa has many types; 1.) Ni Onteka nu Rate malaeka ntomana (reprimand from the father), 2.) Nikontea tupu no doyata (reprimand from the guardian of the surrounding yard), 3) Nambela Doti Ntona/anu ntona (affected by black magic/possessed by someone), 4.) Nambela racu/ni racu (affected by poison/poisoned) being affected by a potion containing poison that has been enchanted can occur within a period of 1 day, 3 days, 7 days and the effect is likened to wood being eaten by termites. 5). Supa "the ability possessed due to heredity. Can cause certain diseases and can cure. If you meet someone like this, you can be sarcastic without him/her intentionally. The pain suffered can be in the form of Ngilu persedia, itching, boils, diarrhea, itching genitals and many more, and the last 6). Ronda is a type of skin disease that attacks the entire body. A dermatological condition that often infects humans, causing symptoms such as itching, pain in the skin, and prolonged fever. For the Kaili ethnic group, this disease is considered dangerous and has the potential to cause death if not treated immediately.

**Table 3 Classification of Diseases Based on the Experience of the Kaili Ethnic Group that are considered dangerous.**

No	Disease classification	Kaili	Disease Type	Disease Cause	Therapy
1.	Conventional disease	<i>Nakado a</i>	<i>Napane</i> /Fever	Due to weather, changes in body temperature, etc.	Drink traditional herbal medicine, get massaged, and take doctor's medicine.
			Two balengga / Headache	Slow eating, allergies, etc.	Drink traditional herbal medicine, get massaged, and take the doctor's medicine.
			Navasa / Common cold	Catching a cold	Drink traditional herbal medicine and doctor's medicine.
			Meke / cough	Allergies or eating the wrong thing	Drink orange soy sauce.
			Two tai / stomach ache or bloated stomach <i>Notutai nju</i> /diarrhea	Eating the wrong thing, catching a cold Teething (children) eating the wrong thing	Get massaged, get massaged. Nionju, get massaged, get herbal medicine.
2.	Non-conventional disease	<i>Mbalasa</i>	<i>Rate</i>	Reprimand from ancestral spirits	<i>Sando</i>
			<i>Nakaontea</i>	Reprimand from spirits	<i>Sando</i>
			<i>Nambela Doti</i>	Black magic	<i>Sando</i>
			<i>Nambela Racu</i>	Eating food that has been enchanted	<i>Sando</i>

No	Disease classification	Kaili	Disease Type	Disease Cause	Therapy
			<i>Supa</i>	Abilities possessed by someone because they are hereditary	<i>Sando</i>
			<i>Ronda</i>	Skin disease comes from someone because they are jealous, hurt and envious ( <i>doti</i> )	<i>Sando</i>

From the table 3, it can be seen that illness and disease are a socio-cultural phenomenon that often occurs and is experienced by our society, especially the Kaili ethnic group, based on knowledge and experience when experiencing illness and disease (ordinary illness / *na kadoa* and unusual illness / *Mabalasa*) until then choosing the right practitioner to cure the disease.

The other study highlights the significant role of traditional healers in treating skin diseases using medicinal plants in Songkhla province, Thailand (11). It documents the extensive use of 66 plant species across 38 families in 25 polyherbal formulations. Most interviewees favor traditional medicine over allopathic medicine, reinforcing previous research on the significance of traditional medicine in the primary health care system of northern Maputaland, South Africa, rural community (12). In Indonesia, *Sapulei* treatment is believed to cure skin diseases and internal ailments, and it is known as *humendeno* (13). This practice has become a tradition in Guinun Sejuk Village, where traditional medicines are used. The *humendeno* disease treatment involves various stages, including preparing materials such as water, coconut milk, and tawon oil, along with certain prohibitions. The final step involves administering the prepared water, coconut milk, and tawon oil to the patient. The tradition of *sapulei* treatment persists due to its perceived benefits, including fostering community solidarity and religious functions (13). However, the presence of modern medical systems is gradually diminishing the practice of *sapulei* treatment within the community (13).

Health examinations by a *sando* are primarily driven by the community's perception that their illnesses are caused by magical diseases (14). Magical diseases are ailments induced by supernatural forces or black magic used by individuals to harm, injure, or even kill others (15). Foster & Anderson (1978) explain that personalistic systems are more complex, involving two levels of causality: the personal agent (such as a witch doctor, ghost, or deity) and the techniques employed by the agent, such as inserting disease objects, poison, soul theft, possession, or sorcery. Initially, the symptoms of magical diseases resemble common medical conditions (16).

The community believes that illness results from a person's biological condition, which is affected by environmental factors, proper nutrition, lifestyle, bodily imbalances, and hereditary diseases (naturalistic view) (17). The types of illness include *alamiah* (physiological), *perbuatan* (psychosocial), and *kapuhunan* (socio-cultural). Meanwhile, illness therapy with ritual aims to return the *aruh* (harmonious, intimate, and peaceful) living conditions between the soul of the sufferer and the natural environment (18). According to the naturalistic concept, people can seek cures for their illnesses through modern medical services, such as visiting a doctor or purchasing medication from a store. Previous research by Amisim et al., (2020) found that individuals who opt for traditional medicine will utilize these methods, while others prefer to continue relying on medical treatments (19). Ultimately, the community affirmed the practice of their traditional medicine. Those who understand the nature and causes of illness will choose their treatment method, whether it be naturalistic or personalistic (17,18).

The findings indicating that patients did not achieve recovery despite repeated consultations with dermatologists highlight the limitations of the biomedical system in recognizing and addressing conditions deeply understood through specific socio-cultural frameworks, such as *Ronda* Disease within the Kaili community. The failure of biomedical diagnosis or treatment in these instances may not solely reflect shortcomings relative to traditional medicine, but rather challenges for the biomedical system in accommodating or integrating personalistic and culturally-bound disease etiologies.

## CONCLUSION

Ronda disease is not an ordinary disease, but is considered a disease sent intentionally to cause suffering to others, or commonly called Mbalasi (a term in the Kaili language). Illnesses and diseases are generally classified as either naturalistic or personalistic. In the case of Ronda disease, the cause is considered personalistic, believed to result from curses or black magic. In order to cure Ronda disease, help is needed from a Sando or a shaman/clever person. Even in some cases, Sando has an assistant in carrying out the treatment and healing process of Ronda disease. The treatment process for Ronda disease involves several stages: the nitavuisi (blowing) method, followed by nirera (rubbing), then nidiu (bathing), and finally applying traditional herbal powder all over the body. These steps aim to dry out and heal the disease

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the Government pay more attention to the needs of the Community, especially in utilizing Health facilities so that the Community can access services quickly and accurately. The Kaili ethnic group in Palu City must maintain their ancestral traditional healing traditions to be understood and continued by the next generation.

Future research could involve designing longitudinal (long-term) studies to carefully document the illness trajectory and treatment outcomes among patients treated by Sando practitioners while fully respecting patient perspectives and the cultural context to understand the perceived effectiveness of this traditional therapy.

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## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All of the authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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