



# Modernizing Medicine in Zimbabwe: HIV/AIDS and Traditional Healers

*David S. Simmons*

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As sub-Saharan Africa continues to confront the runaway epidemic of HIV/AIDS, traditional healers have been tapped as collaborators in prevention and education efforts. The terms of this collaboration, however, are far from settled and continually contested. As *Modernizing Medicine in Zimbabwe* demonstrates, serious questions continue to linger in the medical community since the explosion of the disease nearly thirty years ago. Are healers obstacles to health development? Do their explanations for the disease disregard biomedical science? Can the worlds of traditional healing and modern medicine coexist and cooperate?

Combining anthropological, historical, and public health perspectives, *Modernizing Medicine in Zimbabwe* explores the intersection of African healing traditions and Western health development, emphasizing the role of this historical relationship in current debates about HIV/AIDS. Drawing on diverse sources including colonial records, missionary correspondence, international health policy reports, and interviews with traditional healers, anthropologist David S. Simmons demonstrates the remarkable adaptive qualities of these disparate communities as they try to meet the urgent needs of the people.

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