



Pediatrics in Ancient Peru

Emiliano Paico - Vílchez^{1*} and Lenny Zumaeta - Luna²

¹*Pediatric Surgeon, Professor at the Antenor Orrego Private University, Former Head of the Pediatric Surgery and Surgical Specialties Services of the Belén Hospital in Trujillo, Peru*

²*Medical Specialist in Anesthesia and Resuscitation, Professor of the Private University Antenor Orrego, Anesthesiologist of the Department of Anesthesiology, Resuscitation and Surgical Center of the Belén Hospital of Trujillo, Peru*

***Corresponding Author:** Emiliano Paico – Vílchez, Pediatric Surgeon, Professor at the Antenor Orrego Private University, Former Head of the Pediatric Surgery and Surgical Specialties Services of the Belén Hospital in Trujillo, Peru.

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Abstract

In this article, the authors describe some historical data regarding pediatrics in ancient Peru.

They refer, succinctly and precisely, to the care of children, the customs they had with them, and some illnesses they suffered, as well as the way to treat them.

Likewise, they present photographs of some ceramics allusive to the theme of different pre - inca cultures.

Keywords: Pediatrics; Ancient Peru; Historical Data; Care and Customs; Diseases; Treatment

Introduction

Pediatrics in ancient Peru originated from the moment the first aboriginal woman brought a new being into the world. From this moment the boy or girl needed special care that would allow him to grow and develop properly, for which the mother had an important role, so much so that, if the child got sick, she herself administered the remedies that her thought suggested could serve. Over the years, there were already experts to ensure people's health and treat diseases, mothers took their sick children to these health professionals.

The information we have on the practice of pediatrics in ancient Peru has been built based on archaeological sources such as ceramics from ancient cultures, written references left by

peninsular chroniclers and indigenous blood and the permanence of certain ancestral customs and practices.

The practice of medicine in general and pediatrics in particular, were related to the conception that the aborigines had of seeing the world. This is how they considered that diseases were caused by sins they had committed by transgressing some religious rule or also caused by the evil action of a person with supernatural powers. Therefore, they cured them with magical-religious acts that included the confession of sins and through rational empirical acts.

The purpose of this paper is to describe some historical data regarding pediatrics in ancient Peru, focusing on the care and customs that were had with children, and some diseases that they

suffered, as well as how to treat them. Likewise, some ceramics alluding to the theme of different pre-Inca cultures are presented.

Newborn initial care

The children of ancient Peru were considered worthy of great affection and careful attention from birth; Therefore, the care was scrupulously fulfilled, as this had repercussions on the social organization of the Inca empire.

Before continuing with the care of the newborn, it is good to know the conditions of the birth of a child. Most chroniclers, both Iberian and indigenous, report that in ancient Peru childbirth was performed without any help and in an otherwise circumstantial manner. Childbirth was considered a natural occurrence and women gave birth without much attention. Garcilaso de la Vega [1], Bernabé Cobo [2] and Pedro Pizarro [3] speak of the ease with which the native woman gave birth, usually on a roadside. She herself would cut the umbilical cord with a flint or metal knife, then go with the child to the nearest stream where she would wash and wash the child. After the birth, she continued to walk home or to work, with the child on her back. The most common birthing position was vertical childbirth, either squatting, kneeling, sitting or standing.

Such circumstances occurred in most cases; However, judging by what is observed in the ceramics that stage births, there must undoubtedly have been obstetric complications that required attention from healers or obstetricians.

Once the baby was born, they cut the umbilical cord leaving the umbilical stump, according to Garcilaso de la Vega [1], the size of a finger; and when it fell, after mummifying, they guarded it jealously. The chronicler relates this fact as follows: “when at birth the children cut their navel, they left the tripilla long as a finger; which after it fell they kept with great care”.

After the baby was born, they bathed it in cold water and then wrapped its body and arms with blankets. From then on, every day they bathed her in cold water and often put her in the serene. If the mother wanted Making a gift to the creature, he took the water in his mouth and washed his whole body, except the head, especially the mollera. They did not remove the blankets from the arms for three months, because he said that if they removed them earlier,

the arms were flabby. This practice was done so that the creature would get used to the cold and work; and also for his arms to be strengthened.

Martín de Murúa [4], Spanish chronicler, reports that the custom of bathing newborns originates from the bath given to the new prince Llescas, son of the Inca Huayna Capac, when he was born. The chronicler records the following: “and the day this infant was born they plunged him or washed him in pools or fountains or rivers; which they have the custom of today”.

Pablo Arriaga [5] and Bernabé Cobo [2], among other Spanish chroniclers, tell us that when the child was four days old they placed him in his cradle. This was called Quirao, which was the one that replaced the maternal uterus; and the one made of wood with four legs, one of which was shorter than the others so that in this way it consented to cradle or rock the child. In it they installed a thick cotton blanket so that the place where they placed the child was soft and they fastened it with that same blanket to the crib so that it did not fall.

Pablo Arriaga himself [5] tells us that the cradle was considered a personal huaca (relic or idol), so whoever built it had to be free of impurities for which he had to fast before starting work. Then they introduced the woods that they would use in their preparation in a container with sacred chicha or aqbamama so that the cradle had the same healing and protective powers of the mother. Finally, they adorned it with snake skins and other symbolic figures or totems (effigies or idols) that were considered protectors of childhood.

He also tells us that putting the child in his crib would be the first social ceremony in the life of the child, to which the relatives went and drank chicha, without doing any other special ceremony.

Garcilaso de la Vega [1] says that “when it was time to take the children out of the crib, for not having them in their arms, they made a hole in the floor that reached their chests, lined them with some old rags and there they put them, putting some toys in front of them to entertain themselves. Inside the child could jump and jump, but in their arms they did not carry him, even if he was the son of the greatest curaca in the kingdom”.

Intentional deformation of the skull

Cranial deformation is a procedure performed by ancient civilizations in different parts of the world, through the use of various deforming artifacts.

In ancient Peru, various ancient cultures also practiced cranial deformations; but, it is unknown exactly from what time, nor from which country this custom has been inherited. It is believed, says Abraham Rodríguez [6], that it was inherited from the natives of Nahus, who were great skull deformers in Central America.

The Spanish chroniclers who had the opportunity to observe the autochthonous customs, tell us that the habit of deforming the head of children was well rooted among the Peruvian aborigines at the time of the conquest. Thus, the licentiate Polo de Ondegardo [7], Spanish chronicler, relates that, “the Collas and Puquinas and other nations used to deform the heads of children in many ways with many superstitions”. Bartolomé de las Casas [8], also a Spanish chronicler, reports that, “to know which provinces the people were from, they had the ancient custom, which each province also had, of forming the same heads, the neighbors of each of them were known”. Juan de Torquemada [9] mentions that, “each province has its own custom and different from the others, of deforming the head with industry”.

Tschudi [10] practically repeats what was stated by the peninsular chroniclers cited. He expresses the following: “when an ayllu had adoptado una forma de cabeza o se le señalaba una cualquiera, no tenía nadie derecho de adoptar otra a voluntad”.

As far as the technique to deform the skull is concerned, this began a few days after the child was born; that is, when the bones of the head are soft and flexible, a situation that allowed the modification with ease. At that moment a compressor device was placed on the child’s head, which could be made of slats, woven cap (llauto), bandages or girdles.

The pressure exerted by the skull was transient, for a time that varied from four or five years, according to preferences or conveniences. In this regard, the Spanish chronicler Cieza de León [11] states the following: “at birth the creature was jeweled the head and then put it between two boards, bundled in such a way that when they were four or five years old, they were wide, long and without colodrillo; and they do this a lot and not being content

with the heads that God gives them, they want to give it the size that pleases them most”. Garcilaso de la Vega [1] practically repeats what Cieza de León said. Garcilaso says: “they deformed the heads of the children at birth, placing a tablet on their foreheads and another in the colodrillo (occiput) and pressed them daily until they were four or five years old, so that the head was wide on one side and narrow on the forehead to the colodrillo”.

Cranial deformation could be carried out by means of the following objects: a) Rigid surface apparatus, for example, wooden slats that were placed on the bones of the cranial vault, adjusting them with rope until the desired shape was achieved. b) Bandages that are wound around the cranial vault, with some pressure. (c) Sometimes a combination of rigid surfaces and bandages was used.

José Imbelloni [12] classifies cranial deformation based on the deforming apparatus used. From this point of view, he distinguishes two large groups: tabular and annular or circular, which are very well synthesized by Dr. Juan Lastres [13].

Tabular deformation was achieved by fronto-occipital compression; that is, there was pressure from both the frontal bone and the occiput. These are subdivided into: erect and oblique. In the erect, the posterior pressure was made at the level of the upper scale of the occipital bone; while in the obliques it was done in the entire scale of the occipital.

The annular deformation was obtained by pressure of the head by means of bandages and elastic straps in a circular shape, hence it is also known as circular deformation. They are distinguished by the anatomical seat of pressure and the arrangement of the frontal and occipital bones. They are also subdivided into erect and oblique.

Dr. Weiss [14] states that in ancient Peru the most frequently found cranial deformations are the following:

Cradle deformation. They were practiced on the coast in all eras (pre-Inca and Inca); and are characterized by their tendency to asymmetry (plagiocephaly), by the irregularity and difference of flattening, Weiss tells us. The technique consisted of fixing the head to the cradle by means of ribbons or ropes. The ribbons were knotted over the forehead, which was gradually tightened so that it did not move. These in turn were of two types: Fronto Occipital Costeño and Occipital Costeño Inca type.

Deformations by llautu. They were practiced in the mountains. It is called llautu to everything that the natives used to tie or tie the head. In the strict sense the word llautu is the name of the cingulate of the Inca royalty, very fine bands that used Inca monarchs as a crown, from which hung, covering the face, the imperial tassel: Mascaipacha. The deformations by llautu were of two types: the Andean and the Paracas - Nazca.

The Andean deformation. It is performed only by llautu. There were the following: Aymara types, which was the most frequent and widespread; the llautu compressed the forehead in all its extension and the occipital on the midline in the most prominent part of the back of the head; Includes annular shapes. Goose, which was rare and not very widespread. It is flattened in In a backward shape, like Imbelloni's oblique annular shape, the llautu constricted in a ring the back of the head: the parietal behind the forehead and the occipital in its lower portion, below the external protuberance. Pampas, which were rare and represent the annular mold of the Natchez type.

The Paracas - Nazca deformation. It is made with llautu and cotton pads in the form of a thread. It includes tabular and pseudotabular forms of Imbelloni. Among the deformations we have the following types: Caverns, which are bilobed, are found in Paracas and in some Chavín groups. Necropolis: high and wide head without angles. Long head: Aymara mold, skull flattened on the back, associated with Paracas type. Natchez, which has a vertical shape just like the Pampas type with a flattened back. Nazca, whose typical feature is the flattened forehead, explainable by the use of cotton pad in the frontal region.

Dr. Weiss also refers that there are other types of deformations that can be explained by deforming devices. There is the Huara type deformation: the head is flattened from top to bottom; in some cases, bilobed. It is found with coastal Tiahuanaco material; and the avocodo type: symmetrical head very flattened in the anteroposterior direction and bilobed. It looks like a tabular mold, explainable a cephalic apparatus, like those observed in ceramics.

The reasons why the Peruvian aborigines deformed their skulls are not well determined. Based on the narratives of the chroniclers, it can be said that the motifs were purely aesthetic. Thus, for example, the Spanish chronicler Antonio de Herrera [15], points out that, "the Indians of Cumaná squeeze the child's head between two pads to widen the face that they have for beauty". For his part, Garcilaso de la

Vega [1], referring to the aborigines of Manta, writes: "so that the head was wide from one side to the other and narrow from the forehead to the colodrillo (occiput); and not content with giving them the width they could, they sheared the hair: that there is in the mollera, crown and colodrillo and left those of the sides, and those should not walk combed or settled, but curled and raised to increase the monstrosity of their faces". There are historical references that state that the deformation of the skull was a distinction that concerned chiefs of tribes or a rank of dignity.

For his part, Morales [16] mentions that the reasons were variable and modified according to the time and place. Which, first was by superstition, then by mandate of the rulers and finally by aesthetic inspirations.

In the early years of the Colony, the Spanish conquistadors noticed this custom; and in 1576 the First Provincial Council of Lima issued laws prohibiting cranial deformation, alluding to the deaths of many children. Three years later, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, ordered that "no Indian, nor Indian, squeeze the heads of newborn creatures" due to the irreparable damage it produced.

Breastfeeding

The mothers of ancient Peru knew the importance of breastfeeding for their children. They were aware that the development and growth of their children depended on breastfeeding; in such a way that, if they were fed with mother's milk, they lived healthy and robust. Therefore, breastfeeding was not only a natural act in which affective bonds between mother and child were accentuated and consolidated, but, fundamentally, it was the ideal food from the nutritional point of view, for children under three years of age.

Breastfeeding was governed, according to Dr. María Rebeca Carrión [17] by certain norms established by custom. It was also related to religion. Dr. Maria Roswtworowski [18], refers that in the temple of Pachacamac there is an image of a woman nursing a fox, daughter of Añás, a coastal Andean divinity. Another Andean divinity, Cawillaca, she raised her son alone, nursing him for a year, says Gerald Taylor. [19].

Inca mothers breastfed their children only three times a day: in the morning, at noon and in the afternoon. They did not give more than three times a day, even if they cried. In this regard, Garcilaso de la Vega [1] states the following: “if they were given more than three times, the children got used to suckling all day and grew up dirty with vomits and chambers, and when men were eater and gluttonous”. The mother herself nursed her child; and she would not allow another to breastfeed her, no matter how much she belonged to the upper social class, unless she was sick.

In the time of the Incas, the mother to breastfeed her child, did not have it on her lap, but she leaned on the child and introduced the nipple to the mouth; because there was the belief that, if the children nursed in the mother’s lap, they became crybabies and did not want to be in the cradle, but always in the arms.

On the other hand, in pre-Inca times, the mother breastfed her child while holding it on her lap, as can be seen in the splendid Mochica ceramics and those of other cultures, which represent the sublime act of breastfeeding.

To increase milk secretion, the mothers ingested, refers to the Spanish chronicler Bernabé Cobo [2], a quinoa stew (*Chenopodium quinoa*) with fat. They also ate some worms that they called **ñuñu** – Quehua which, according to Ulloa, referred to by Laverería [20], stimulates milk secretion.

During the lactation period, the mothers abstained from sexual intercourse. It was considered an impure act to have relations with a mother who was lactating, due to the belief that semen could contaminate milk. According to Garcilaso [1], “it was bad for the milk and made the child thin”.

Garcilaso de la Vega was probably referring to abstinence from vaginal intercourse, and not to anal intercourse, since there are ceramics that represent scenes in which the mother breastfeeds her child while having anal intercourse with her husband.

If the mother had enough milk to feed her child, she would not give it other types of food until weaned; They believed that if he did, he would offend the milk, and the children would grow up dirty and stinking.

Children were weaned at two years of age or a little older. In the time of the Incas they used to hold a great party when they weaned the first-born male children, not so with the daughters or the other second or third males, at least not with the solemnity of the first.

The weaning date coincided with the Rutuchico festival. At this party the child received his definitive name, and for the first time he was differentiated sexually by clothing. In short, the child was actively incorporated into his community. This would show that weaning occurred when the child no longer required, physically or emotionally, breastfeeding.

Finally, it must be said that no evidence has been found on the possible consumption of milk from a llama or from another camelid, both in children and adults; therefore, the children received only breast milk to ensure their nutrients.

Some pediatric diseases

The way of getting sick for the thought of the aboriginal of ancient Peru, was, like the Hippocratic thought, symptomatic; they did not have a defined concept of disease. They were isolated symptoms, for example, pain, fever, cough, diarrhea, bleeding, etc. They are not strictly diseases, but as Lastres [13] says, specific ways of getting sick.

When the children got sick it was a reason for offering to the gods, so the parents had to confess their sins. In this regard, Mr. Polo de Ondegardo [7], a Spanish chronicler, reports that “this confession was used when their children or wives or husbands or their cacique were sick”.

Before any indisposition of the baby, they examined the dorsal face of the tongue; if it had a whitish color it was because the baby is sick, so they gave it the mummified umbilical stump to suck on. Garcilaso de la Vega says that the stump had to be from the child himself, otherwise it would not have a good effect. The chronicler writes like this: it had to be his own (tripilla), because they said that someone else’s did not take advantage of him.

If the infants suffered from any disease, especially if they had a fever, they were washed with urine and wrapped in blankets; and if urine could be collected from the child, they gave him a drink to drink. [1]

Congenital malformations

Judging by what is observed in the ceramics of ancient Peruvian cultures, congenital malformations among the aborigines of ancient Peru were, apparently, frequent in frequency and little in variety.

The mythical thought that reigned in the spiritual world of the Peruvian aborigines made them conceive that external congenital malformations were attributed to the exposure of the pregnant woman to lightning (illapa), which was one of the gods of the Inca Olympus.

Under this conception, newborns with congenital malformations were considered special beings, since it was believed that the malformation was a sign of having supernatural powers. They were considered intermediaries between the divine and the earthly; therefore, people could in the future exercise the functions of priest, doctor or counselor. They were people highly appreciated and respected by the State and by their society.

Many chroniclers, such as Martín de Murúa [4], Bernabé Cobo [2], Giovanni Oliva [21], Guamán Poma de Ayala [22], Antonio de Avendaño [23], among others, when dealing with the conditions or requirements for act as a doctor, they report that carriers of congenital malformations could also perform the role of doctor, priest or counselor.

The Neapolitan Jesuit chronicler Giovanni Anello Oliva [21], referring to newborns with congenital malformations who in the future exercised the functions of a doctor, states that the more serious the malformation, the more accurate or effective the healers were and, therefore, they were more sought after and revered. This chronicler wrote the following: "they have the same thing when a creature is marked at birth. And thus entering age the most of these give sorcerer, spells and fortune tellers. And the more crippled one of them is, they have and revere him as a greater sorcerer".

If the children with malformations were stillborn (stillbirths), or died after childbirth due to the malformation being incompatible with life, they were mummified and kept in a ceramic urn to be venerated as living proof of divine will.

People with congenital malformations were protected by the State and by society. In this regard, the chronicler Guamán Poma

de Ayala [22] tells us that in Cusco the Inca emperors gathered the blind, hunchbacked, mute and those with a cleft nose (cleft lip or cleft lip) in the same neighborhood, forcing them to marry among those who had the same defect or malformation with the aim of not extinct; In addition, they were at the service of the Inca. Guamán Poma de Ayala also tells us, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, those who had congenital malformations could work as doctors.

In the government of Topa Inca Yupanqui, although children were sacrificed as a sign of worship and submission to their gods and to the Inca monarch himself, it was strictly forbidden to sacrifice children with congenital malformations. In the information that Viceroy Toledo ordered, it is noted: "They made sacrifices of boys and girls who had no defects, that the Incas ordered them to be killed and that they sent to each province to request said children for sacrifice; that these were for them to have health, good cornfields and good success in everything. Child sacrifices were made at sunrise and at noon" [24].

Francisco de Ávila [25], Spanish chronicler, reports that one of the main gods of Huarochirí and Yauyos, named Ñamsapa, son of Illapa and Pariacaca, had three associated diseases: cleft lip, leishmaniasis and goiter. He was a very powerful god, he led and protected the irrigation canals that transported water, an important element for cultivating the lands of the sun and the State. It is believed that the power came from the malformations it possessed; hence Ñamsapa was a god highly revered by farmers.

Because they were considered intermediaries between the divine and the earthly, they belonged to a privileged elite with close ties to political power. They were people who wore beautiful outfits, especially those who served as priests or healers.

Among the congenital malformations that are evidenced in the ceramics of ancient Peruvian cultures, the following stand out: nasal encephalocele, macrocephaly, microcephaly, congenital blindness, cleft lip, macrostomia (big mouth), macrotic (big ears), dysmorphic facies, macrognathia, micrognathia, pectus excavatus (sunken chest), pectus carinatum (pichpon chest), phocomelia, macrodactyly, polydactyly, flatfoot, congenital equine botfoot varu, achondroplastic dwarfism, double-headed twins, conjoined twins, Down syndrome, Crouzon syndrome, Freeman – Sheldon, hermaphroditism, joint hyperflexibility, etc.

Acquired diseases

Tetanus

The aborigines knew tetanus under the name of chirirayay onccooy or zuzunca onccooy and by the Spanish under the name of pasmo or seven day sickness. It was very frequent in newborns. They treated it, according to Bernabé Cobo [2], with the tulma (*Dendrophthora spp*). Antonio de la Calancha [26] states that quina (*Cinchona officinalis*) was also used for this disease.

Respiratory diseases

In diseases of the respiratory system, they administered curative preparations, with singular success, according to the symptom manifested by the patient.

To treat coughs, according to Bernabé Cobo [2], they recommended infusions of añu (*Tropaeolum tuberosum*) which “was a root with the shape and size of the oca (*Oxalis tuberosa*) that removes the breast”. They also used, continues Cobo, “cooking soyco-soyco (*Tagetes mandonii*) that softens the chest”.

As an expectorant, says Cobo [2], they prescribed an infusion made from llauilli wayta flowers (yaulli flowers). The llauilli is a plant with yellow and pink flowers, which grows, especially in the district of Yauli - Huancavelica.

For nasal catarrh, says the Spanish doctor and chronicler Nicolás Monardes [27], they used the chulli herb.

The fever was fought with an infusion of paico (*Chenopodium Ambrosioides*) Garcilaso de la Vega [1] and Monardes [27] tell us. They also used the husk.

Asthma was treated with chuquicanlla and guariconca, reports Bernabé Cobo [2]; while Antonio Herrera [13] mentions that the Balsam of Peru and cajarhuincho is used to treat this disease.

For the pleurisy, says Cobo [2], they gave skunk blood to drink. In pneumonia they used an infusion or plaster of the herbs guariconda, hacaguaguani and haratuc, Antonio Herrera tells us [15]. To treat tuberculosis, Cobo [2] tells us about the juice of the Pitahaya (*Hylocereus undatus*), and Monardes [27] about the Balsam of Peru.

Digestive diseases

The diarrhea accompanied by vomiting, stomach pain and colic was the consequence of gastroenterocolitis, since the children often became contaminated by drinking contaminated water, eating dirt and sleeping on the ground.

Vomiting was combated by giving her a drink of mucus root tea (*Piperácea stomachicum*), it was ingested hot and with sugar because it was bitter, Bernabé Cobo tells us [2].

In diarrhea they used anocara (*Lepidium bipinnatifidum*) and chullo-chullo powders. Antonio Herrera [15] mentions the sinsha to contain the cameras. This chronicler notes: “The cameras are given some herbs that horses eat, which in their language is called sinsha”.

There were also diarrheas caused by cold and heat. Cold diarrhea was cured with infusions of boiled avocado seeds and rosemary, or chewed coca leaves were placed in the stomach. When diarrhea was caused by heat, they treated it with an infusion of the guava heart with ground white corn and plantain leaves, and if it was a newborn, they gave it infusions of mallow leaves.

For digestion, according to Cobo [2], they employed the boiling of the leaves of goose (*Oxalis tuberosa*), of ulluma or olluco (*Ullucus tuberosus*), haratuc, sallica (*Asclepias spp*), or paico (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*); infusion of molle seeds (*Schinus molle*) was also indicated.

Parasitosis was treated with harmico. Cobo [2] referring to this herb says: “the Indians eat it raw very commonly because they say it preserves them from breeding worms”. For this purpose, they also ingested an infusion of paico (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*) and the resin of molle (*Schinus molle*).

Pediculosis capitis

Pediculosis capitis, a parasitic disease that affects the scalp, has been closely related to the human being and its different cultures since its appearance on earth. The causative agent of this disease is the pediculus humanus capitis, commonly called louse.

The earliest evidence of *pediculosis capitis* in the aborigines of Peru is provided by Mochica ceramics, in which skilled potters have amazingly depicted women and supernatural beings delousing their hair, and lice on their clothes.

Chroniclers such as Garcilaso de la Vega [1], Pedro Cieza de León [11], Antonio de Herrera [15] and Giovanni Anello Oliva [21], when dealing with the tributes that had to be paid to the Inca, say that the monarch he forced the poor to pay the tribute in lice, in such a way that each of them had to present a certain amount of these ectoparasites. Likewise, they give us to understand the little hygiene that the poor of the Inca empire had.

Paleopathological studies have confirmed the presence of lice in aboriginal mummies. For example, Ewing [28] found lice and nits in the hair of Inca mummies; Pedro Weiss [29], found nits in the hair of Paracas mummies. Lice have also been found on the head of mummies of an Inca prince and his companions [30].

These sources categorically demonstrate two facts: first, that *pediculosis capitis* produced by these ectoparasites is a disease that already existed before the arrival of the Spanish in Peru and that it was very frequent; and second, that the disease, as it did not respect age or social condition.

Regarding the treatment of *pediculosis capitis*, Bernabé Cobo [2] tells us that the aborigines “used raisins, earth or clay to wash their heads with it and kill these parasites that they called uza, as well as uzayoc or uzazapa which takes them”.

Stye

It was a frequent problem in children. This is an infection in the form of a red bump or swelling that appears near the edge of the upper or lower eyelid or under the eyelid.

According to the thought of the aborigines, the stye was produced when the child looked at the sexual organ of a person of the opposite sex, through a hole, furtively [31]. The treatment consisted of washing the patient’s eye in the morning with cold water daily for several days until it healed. Likewise, hot coca leaves were placed in the area of the stye, or washed with an infusion of horsetail and plantain.

“The evil eye”

The “evil eye” is a cultural syndrome that has been widespread in many civilizations around the world since ancient times, whose causative agent is an “intense and deep” look exerted by a deity, a spirit, an animal or a person (usually an adult.) on a child or adult, causing disease and even death. This affected counterpart is said to be “spotted” or “spoiled with the evil eye”. Babies and very young children used to be and often are the most vulnerable to acquiring the “evil eye”.

The symptoms of the “evil eye” in babies manifested, in general, after the infant has been in contact with someone who is considered to have a “strong gaze” or “heavy energy”. The most common symptoms are: crying uncontrollable, restlessness, lack of sleep, sometimes drowsiness, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, fever, allergies without apparent cause, intense reaction to stimuli, defenses are low, and could even die [31].

Watched “or not, the healer or doctor performed “cleaning with the egg”, a procedure that consisted of passing a fresh egg through the child’s body. At the end of the cleaning, they broke it and deposited it in a tank with water. If the egg sank to the bottom, the child was not “peeped” and if it remained floating it was because it had the “evil eye”, and that was enough for the child to be cured [31]. Dr. Hermilio Valdizán [32] also tells us that they did the “cleaning of the guinea pig”, the procedure is described as follows: a black male guinea pig was rubbed against the body of the sufferer and when the animal died it was stuffed, reading the entrails in especially the heart and lungs, sprinkled with white corn powder and drops of vinegar are poured. Then it is observed, if the heart is erect when receiving the powders, the patient will heal, otherwise, irretrievably lost.

“Scare”

Susto is also a cultural syndrome, considered as an illness or disease characterized by the loss of the soul caused by a psychic trauma that can have somatization. The body, abandoned by the spirit, loses its balance and disease develops.

It is known under different names in the different regions of the country: the southern Quechuas know it as Mancharisqa (scared), ánimo qarkusqa (loss of the soul). In the north they call it fright, hani (with the lost soul), Pacha chari, evil of fright.

The child’s soul can be stolen by evil spirits from a mountain, a ravine, a lonely place, a river, a lake, the night, a storm, a tomb, a huaca or by any geographical feature [33]. It implied a temporary loss of the vital essence that gives life, movement and spirit to the human being [31].

In this disease, the patient begins to lose weight, is pale, loses his appetite and is very thirsty. In advanced cases the patient stays in bed. In some cases it is accompanied by moderate fever and other times vomiting appears, with or without diarrhea. These somatic symptoms are always accompanied by nervousness, anxiety, depression, frightening nightmares, night terrors, and unexplained fear.

The fright was cured by making the “child’s spirit” return to his body, through magical practices and making an offering to the pachamama (earth). The call of the fugitive soul was carried out with articles of clothing. There were several ways to cure or prevent this disease. For example, they dressed the child in a poncho that was made from guinea pig skin; or a necklace formed with a huairuro and corn [30] was placed on the child’s neck.

Dr. Hermilio Valdizán [32] also tells us that they did the “cleaning of the guinea pig”, the procedure is described as follows: “a black male guinea pig was fictionalized over the body of the mourner and when the animal dies it will be stuffed, reading the viscera especially the heart and lungs, dusted with white corn powder and drops of vinegar are poured into it. If the heart is erect when receiving the powders, the patient will heal, otherwise, irretrievably lost”.

“Irijua”

This syndrome that occurs in all social classes, is typical of children who acquire it when the mother has another baby, to whom it is believed that she lavishes more love and care than the previous one. The child becomes thoughtful, melancholic and moody, easily irritated, crying and shouting aggressively. He loses his appetite, sleep, loses weight and becomes physically and mentally weak. They attributed the cause to envy on the part of the eldest son. This syndrome did not affect the minor children.

The cure consisted of executing religious magical procedures: “payment to the earth”, which was a sign or sign of respect for nature. It consisted of making a ceremony, together with a healer or doctor, in which they invoked the gods of nature, then offered

offerings to Pachamama, for example coca leaves, cereal seeds, chicha, unworked silver or any object with symbolic and magical powers, who acted as mediators between humans and nature.



Figure 1: Labor in expulsive phase without medical attention. The parturient seated on a bench actively contracts the abdomen, and the baby comes out of the uterus in a cephalic presentation. She also has an umbilical hernia. Mochica ceramics – Rafael Larco Herrera Archaeological Museum (MARLH).



Figure 2: Scene of a labor in the expulsive phase without medical attention. The woman in labor semi-sitting on a rock actively contracts her abdomen and presses it with her hands. The baby leaves the uterus in a cephalic presentation. Vicus ceramics - MARLH.



Figure 3: Scene of a labor in the expulsive phase without medical attention. The seated parturient actively contracts the abdomen and with their hands they press it. The baby leaves the uterus in a cephalic presentation. Virú or Gallinazo ceramics – National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru (MNAAHP).



Figure 5: Scene of a Birth in phase expulsive with attention medical. Mochica ceramics - MARLH.



Figure 4: Scene of a labor in the expulsive phase with medical attention. The parturient seated on a bench actively contracts the abdomen; The baby leaves the uterus in a cephalic presentation. Simultaneously, an assistant presses the parturient's belly while the obstetrician, who is squatting, picks up the baby and performs the respective maneuvers, facilitating its delivery. Mochica ceramics – MNAAHP.



Figure 6: An elderly woman shows a baby who has a skull deforming device on his head. She sports a tembetá or bezote on her lower lip. Chimú ceramics – Museum of the Amano Foundation (MFA).



Figure 7: Elderly woman shows a baby who has a skull compression device on his head. She sports a tembetá or bezote on her lower lip. Chimú ceramics- Cassinelli Archaeological Museum (MAC).



Figure 9: Mother breastfeeding her baby. Mochica ceramics – Museum of the Central Reserve Bank of Peru (MBCRP).



Figure 8: An elderly woman shows a child who has a skull deforming device on his head. She wears a tembetá, necklace and bracelet. Lambayeque or Sicán ceramic - MBL.



Figure 10: Mother breastfeeding her son. Mochica ceramics – MBCRP.



Figure 11: Mother breastfeeding her son. Mochica ceramics – MFA.



Figure 13: Representation of a mother (mama Cacao) wrapped in the cocoa fruit while nursing her child. Mochica ceramics MARLH Museum.



Figure 12: Mother breastfeeding her son. Virú ceramics – MNAAHP.



Figure 14: Mother breastfeeding her son. Cupisnique ceramics – MNAAHP.



Figure 15: Mother breastfeeding a grown son. Cupisnique ceramics – MARLH.



Figure 17: Mother breastfeeding her child. Mochica ceramics - MARLH.



Figure 16: Mother breastfeeding her son. Nazca ceramics- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA.



Figure 18: Mother breastfeeding her son. Chancay ceramics – MNAAHP.



Figure 19: Mother carrying her son on her lap. Mochica ceramics – MAC.



Figure 21: Medical mother meditating before practicing her art, while her son watches her. Mochica ceramics - MARLH.



Figure 20: Ceramic that represents a mother resting with her son. Mochica ceramics – MNAAHP.



Figure 22: Mother carrying her son on her lap. Mochica ceramics – MAC.



Figure 23: Mother with her son enjoying a walk holding hands. Mochica ceramics - MARLH.



Figure 25: A doctor performs a magical cure on a baby while the mother breastfeeds her child. Mochica ceramics – El Brujo Site Museum.



Figure 24: Woman carrying a girl on her shoulders; both with intentionally deformed skulls. The child has an oblique tabular type skull and the woman an annular or circular type, which would indicate that they are not related. Nazca ceramics – MNAHP.



Figure 26: Surgeon with his hands performs healing magic on a sick child. Mochica ceramics – MARLH .



Figure 27: Physician in full magical healing practice on a child.
Mochica ceramics - Hamburg Museum of Ethnology.

Summary

In this article, the authors describe some historical data regarding pediatrics in ancient Peru.

They refer, in a succinct and precise way, the care of the children, the customs that were had with them, and some diseases that they suffered, as well as the way to treat them.

They also present photographs of some ceramics alluding to the theme of different pre-Inca cultures.

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