

Use of Dried Blood Spots: An Ideal Tool for Medical Anthropology “in the Field”

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Abstract

The use of dried whole blood spot samples provides medical anthropological researchers—especially those working in remote, isolated communities—with several advantages over traditional methods. Anthropological research utilizing venous-drawn blood samples can create challenges in terms of phlebotomy training, personnel needs, storage and transportation requirements, and participant discomfort. Alternatively, research utilizing dried blood spot samples, via finger stick collection techniques, eliminates or reduces these problems greatly. While the use of dried blood spots is often the best sampling option for anthropologists or other population-level researchers, the method does have some limitations. Nevertheless, as the number of dried blood spot analyte protocols continues to increase, the logistical and participant advantages of dried blood spot methods assure their increased utility in biomedical anthropological research in the future.

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