

Chapter 16

Hybrid Method for Exploring Efficacy of Indigenous Management of Common Cold through African Therapy

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ABSTRACT

*Medicinal plants have been used by indigenous people for the treatment of different conditions since time immemorial. About 80% of the population in the world uses medicinal plants as the first line of treatment (WHO, 2003). The main aim of this study was to confirm for the western science that the knowledge of indigenous people is also a domain of science. The study was tried to understand the efficacy of indigenous management of influenza using two medicinal plants, namely, wildeals (*Artemisia Afra*) and wynruit (*Ruta Graveolens*). Indigenous populations have been managing the ailments, including flu, using medicinal plants. This form of therapy is not taken seriously, despite its widespread use today. The study used the hybrid methodology approach. The findings confirmed that generally the two medicinal plants used by the community to treat common cold are effective.*

We have come to recognise that we are in a situation of increasing interdependence, and that our future is intrinsically linked to the preservation of the global life-support systems and to the survival of all human forms of life. The nations and scientists of the world are called upon to acknowledge the urgency of using knowledge from all fields of sciences in a responsible manner to address human needs and aspirations without misusing this knowledge. (Nabudere, 2011, p.101)

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0833-5.ch016

INTRODUCTION

The extent of the use of medicinal plants for remedies by indigenous people in southern Africa is approximately above 80% of the total population (WHO, 2003). This high usage can be attributed to pharmaceutical drugs being too expensive and ill-afforded by most of the people especially those living in rural areas (Mander, Diedericks, Ntuli, Mavundla, Williams, & McKean, 2007). The increased demand for indigenous medicines can also be attributed to the Human Immune Virus (HIV)/AIDS pandemic which still has no specific cure, as well as high levels of unemployment. These two above issues have contributed to people looking for work-related luck medication from indigenous healers; so as to enhance their chances of getting employed and, the fact that indigenous medications are easily accessible to the community and are cheaper have also contributed to the demand (McKean, 2007). Furthermore, diseases are associated with sorcery in an African context, and indigenous people have a trust that only the healer can cure sorcery. This applies to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Unemployment in an African context can also be attributed to sorcery or the ancestral punishment. In order to get employment, the person is expected to please the ancestors and this can be done with the guidance of the indigenous healer (McKean, 2007).

Although the demand and usage of indigenous medication are increasing, Mander et al (2007) are of the opinion that both indigenous and western healing systems have always been well known within the communities. However, the western healing system is still enjoying all the recognition, even though the contribution of indigenous healing system remains the first line of consultation utilized by about 80% of the population in southern Africa. The reason for limited recognition despite high utilisation of indigenous healing systems can be attributed to colonialization and religious belief systems. The above mentioned issues have ultimately caused a threat towards the indigenous people's right to existence and the social being, as well as cultural practices of their choice by making the indigenous knowledge systems to be demonic. In addition, where they are recognized, the indigenous people frequently face challenges of trying to convince policymakers and western science researchers to accept their perspective on development, initiatives and appropriate service provision (Ohenjo, Willis, Jackson, Nettleton, Good & Mugarura, 2006).

Based on the above statement Semali and Kincheloe (1999), also noted that western science has become the dominant global knowledge system and also becoming intolerant towards other persuasions. This situation affected the indigenous knowledge system and it was not recognized as science of healing but labelled as witchcraft by the western scientists. In contrast, the above statement did not stop indigenous people from using the healing system they know best as their first line of consultation.

The objectives of this chapter are to investigate the effectiveness of two medicinal plants that are used as either mono or combination therapy in the treatment of common cold by indigenous people. In addition this chapter also aimed at validating the efficacy of these medicinal plants in the western laboratory as well as restoring the integrity of healing and respect for African indigenous medicines used in the communities. This was done by undertaking the in-vitro experiment in the laboratory.

BACKGROUND

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is viewed as that form of knowledge which people of the formerly colonized countries survived on before the advent of colonialism, and it manifested itself through different dimensions like agriculture, medicine, security, botany, zoology, craft and linguistics (Mapara, 2009). However

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