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Patronage and Effect of Herbal Medicine on Residents of Bodija Community in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract

The use of herbal medicine has been extensively studied among the adult and paediatric population with chronic illnesses, such as cancer and sickle cell anaemia. Although the therapies evolving have shown promising potential with the efficacy of a good number of herbal medicines established, many of them remain untested and their use is either poorly monitored or not monitored at all. Therefore, safety has also been a major issue with the use of herbal medicine, while there is the need for relevant regulatory authorities to be put in place with appropriate measures to prevent the abuse of herbal medicine. This study was geared towards investigating the patronage and effect of herbal medicine on the residents of Bodija community in the Ibadan metropolis.

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 125 residents of Bodija Community. Data was collected from this sample, using a close ended questionnaire tagged, "Patronage and Effect of Herbal

Medicine Questionnaire". The data was analysed using a frequency count and simple percentages.

The findings revealed that herbal medicine is highly patronized in the community and that it was effective in the treatment of illnesses. The findings also revealed that there was no adverse effect from the usage of the herbal medicine.

The study recommended that government should make efforts by fully integrating herbal medicine into the modern health care system, as part of its objective of providing affordable, accessible and effective health care for all. It is also recommended that a standard healthcare regulating framework must be set up for herbal medicine practitioners, among others.

Key words: Herbal medicine patronage, Residents of Bodija community, Indigenous herbs.

Introduction

Herbal medicine has been around for a long time and happens to be the origin of scientific medicine as we know it today. In recent times, however, herbal medicine has been growing in popularity and getting increasing attention and interest as earlier noted by Levine, Weber-Levine & Mayberry (2003). The use of herbal medicine continues to expand rapidly across the world, with many people now resorting to these products for the treatment of various health challenges in different national healthcare settings (World Health Organization, 2004). This past decade has obviously witnessed a tremendous surge in the acceptance of and public interest in natural therapies both in developing and developed countries, with these herbal remedies being available not only in drug stores, but now also in food stores and supermarkets. It is estimated that up to four billion people (representing 80% of the world's population) living in the developing world rely on herbal medicinal products as a primary source of healthcare, and traditional medical practice which involves the use of herbs (Mukherjee, 2002; Bodeker, Ong, Grundy, Burford & Shein, 2005; Bandaranayake, 2006). Herbal medicine is

“knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness”. Herbal medicines which are also called botanical medicines or phytomedicines, refer to herbs, herbal materials, herbal preparations, and finished herbal products that contain parts of plants or other plant materials as active ingredients (WHO, 2008). The plant materials include seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark and flowers.

The recent resurgence of public interest in herbal remedies has been attributed to several factors, such as the efficacy or effectiveness of plant medicines, preference of consumers for natural therapies, as well as the high cost of most modern drugs, among others (Bandaranayake, 2006). However, it seems that the above mentioned factors may necessitate the patronage of conventional medicine in developing countries. In Nigeria for instance, modern health services have failed to meet the needs of the teeming population. The state of health care in the country points to the poor living habits of the people. Also, poverty, joblessness and ignorance have all compounded the situation of the average Nigerian, making it difficult for them to enjoy adequate health care. One of the immediate consequences has been resort to herbal medicine.

Ayantunji (2002) states that the patronage of herbal medicine has increased due to a number of factors, such as the poor or non-performance of synthetic drugs, which are either fake and adulterated or expired. Ujua, Bisong and Ishor (2013) were of the view that the problem of fake drugs, the low or ineffective healing or curative strength of the orthodox services, and high cost and poor distribution has made the trado-medical service enjoy high patronage. All these tend to enhance the preference and patronage of herbal medicine. In Nigeria, the use of herbal medicine has been the dominant method of health care system in all cultural and traditional societies. Even in most urban and rural settings today, there is still high patronage of herbal medicine. Most people utilize herbal medicine essentially for therapeutic purposes, with the ultimate goal of the treatment of diseases or disorders as well as

restoring health to normalcy. Hence, human health becomes the central point of the high use of herbal medicine.

Bodija is one of the major communities in the city of Ibadan, Oyo state. It is inhabited mainly by civil servants, business tycoons and students. Even though a large proportion of these residents utilize the formal health care system, the use of herbal medicine is ubiquitous and widely practiced. Unfortunately, due to the increase in population, rapid urbanization and industrialization, the plants and materials from which most of these herbal medicines are derived have been annihilated. As a result, people travel to rural areas where the forests and plants are still conserved to obtain these herbs. It has also been documented that despite the technological advancement and sophistication in medical care, especially in urban settings, the subscription to herbal medicine is still very high. Increase in out-of-pocket expenditure on health care services in formal health institutions further propels people's reliance on herbal treatment. A study carried out by Duru, Iwu, Oluoha and Ohanle (2016b) found out that 77.5% of the respondents use traditional medicine, while 63.7% combine orthodox and traditional medicine to get cured. Belonwu (2011) also confirmed that 54.7% subscribe to traditional medicine to treat malaria. These days, people combine the conventional and traditional methods of treatment to stay healthy (Duru, et al., 2016b; Duru, Uwakwe, Chinomnso, Mbachi, Diwe, Agunwa, Iwu and Merenu, 2016a). Hence, the importance of herbal medication in the maintenance, restoration and preservation of health cannot be overemphasized.

Statement of the Problem

The use of herbal medicinal has increased tremendously over the past three decades with not less than 80% of people worldwide relying on them for some part of primary healthcare. The use of herbal medicines has been extensively studied in Nigeria among the adult and paediatric population with chronic illnesses such as epilepsy, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, sickle cell anaemia and asthma. Only a very few studies have specifically evaluated herbal medicine use among the general population. Although therapies involving these agents have shown promising potential with the

efficacy of a good number of herbal medicine clearly established, many of them remain untested and their use are either poorly monitored or not even monitored at all.

However, since many of the herbal medicine preparations may supposedly contain similar ethnobotanical plant species with their conventional counterparts, this may put the respondents practicing herbal medicine polypharmacy at risk of toxicity. Adequate labelling of herbal medicine preparations and their packaged products with the constituent elements and a general public enlightenment programme on the need to read herbal medicine product labels very well may be necessary to avert herbal medicine toxicity. The consequence of not doing this is an inadequate knowledge of their mode of action, potential adverse reactions, contraindications, and interactions with existing orthodox pharmaceuticals and functional foods to promote both safe and rational use of these agents. Since safety continues to be a major issue with the use of herbal medicine. It becomes imperative therefore, that the relevant regulatory authorities put in place appropriate measures to protect the public patronage and usage of herbal medicine by ensuring that all herbal medicines are safe and of suitable quality. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the patronage and effect of herbal medicine on the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the patronage and effect of herbal medicine on the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State. While, the specific objectives of this study were to:

- i. Assess the level of awareness of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo state;
- ii. Examine the extent to which people patronize and use herbal medicine in the Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo state;
- iii. Ascertain the effect of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo state; and

- iv. Examine gender differences in the patronage and use of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the level of awareness of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State?
- ii. What is the extent to which people patronize and use herbal medicine in Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State?
- iii. What is the effect of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State?
- iv. Do gender differences influence the patronage and use of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community in Ibadan, Oyo State?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many respects; the findings of this study will help the inhabitants of Bodija community as well as the society at large as regards the global acceptance and use of herbal medicines and related products with emphasis on adverse reactions in the use of herbal medicine. This study would also be of importance to the relevant regulatory policies bodies on herbal medicine in different countries of the world to be proactive and continue to put in place appropriate measures to protect public health by ensuring that all herbal medicines approved for sale are safe and of suitable quality. Providers of medicines, such as physicians, nurses and pharmacists, often have little training in and understanding of how herbal medicines affect the health of their patients. Many of them are also poorly informed about these products and how they are being used. Adequate training is now very essential, since most patients are almost often on other types of prescription or non-prescription medicines. In spite of the fact that the active involvement of orthodox healthcare professionals is continuously solicited and a huge responsibility lies with them in terms of their valuable contributions to the safety monitoring of medicinal products, it is also very important that all providers of herbal medicines are sufficiently

empowered to play a role in monitoring the safety of herbal medicines. This, however, should be in collaboration with the orthodox healthcare professionals. For this to be effective, it would be essential to create an atmosphere of trust to facilitate the adequate sharing of knowledge about the use and safety of herbal medicines. In fact, the education of health-care professionals, providers of herbal medicines and patients/consumers is vital for the prevention of potentially serious risks from the misuse of herbal medicines.

The outcome of this study would guide policy makers, scholars, researchers, pharmaceutical companies, and governmental and non-governmental organizations to establish a framework that would incorporate herbal medicine into the National Health Care System in order to fervently meet the health needs of the populace.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study is the Young choice-making model proposed in 1981, which is based on his ethnographic studies of health services utilization in Mexico. This model incorporates four components that are most essential to the individual's health service choice: first, perceptions of gravity; this category includes both the individual's perception and their social network's consideration of illness severity. Gravity is based on the assumption that the culture classifies illnesses by level of severity. Second, the knowledge of a home treatment; if a person knows of a home remedy that is efficacious, they will be likely to utilize that treatment before utilizing a professional health care system. Home remedy knowledge is based on lay referral. Third, the faith in remedy; this component incorporates the individual's belief about the efficacy of the treatment for the present illness. An individual will not utilize the treatment if they do not believe the treatment is effective. Fourth, the accessibility of treatment; accessibility incorporates the individuals' evaluation of the cost of health services and the availability of those services. According to Young, access may be the most important influence on health care utilization (Wolinsky, 1988b). The summation of this model holds that an individual understands the gravity of the illness and subscribes to the use of herbal medicine as the first choice of treatment before utilizing the

formal health care. His belief in the efficacy and safety of the home remedy plays a substantial role in his/her quick recovery from the illness.

Methodology

Research design

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. It is one of the empirical research designs which aim at describing, systematically, the facts and characteristics of a given population in the area of interest. Furthermore, the descriptive survey research method involves collecting data to shed light on issues, to answer questions or to test hypothesis concerning the current status of a subject of study. It is interested in collecting data from a relatively large population at a particular time.

Population of the study

The population of the study is the inhabitants of Bodija Community in Ibadan North Local Government, Oyo State.

Sample and sampling technique

The random sampling technique was used to select 125 inhabitants in Bodija community, Ibadan which represented 25% of 500 inhabitants.

Research instrument

The main instrument for gathering data was a questionnaire tagged, "Patronage and Effect of Herbal Medicine Questionnaire" (PEHMQ). The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A focused on demographic information, while Sections B and C focused on question items on the patronage and effect of herbal medicine on the inhabitants. The questionnaire used the Likert format where options are provided for inhabitants to tick their responses.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

In order to test for content validity, the items in the questionnaire were compared with the stated specific objectives before being submitting to...

reliability of the instrument produced 0.87, which was achieved with the aid of the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient technique.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the study was analysed descriptively, using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Results

Analysis based on research questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community of Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Showing respondents' view on the basis of level of awareness of herbal medicine

Statement	Yes	No
Do you believe that herbal medicines are beneficial in healthcare management?	90.4%	9.6%
Have you ever recommended the use of herbal medicines?	76.8%	23.2%
Are you aware that several international official herbal books exist?	76%	24%
There is no harmful herbal medicine.	49.6%	50.4%

Table 1 shows that 113 (90.4%) believed that herbal medicines are beneficial to healthcare management; while 12 (9.6%) disagreed that herbal medicines are beneficial to healthcare management. A total of 76.8% of the respondents agreed that they recommended the use of herbal medicines, while 23.2% disagreed that they recommended the use of herbal medicines. A total of 76% of the respondents are aware that several international official herbal

books exist, while 24% are not aware that several international official herbal books exist. Also, 49.6% of the respondents agreed that there is no harmful herbal medicine, while 50.4% disagreed that there is no harmful herbal medicine.

These findings support that of Bodeker (2005) which reports that during the past decade, there has been increasing public interest and acceptance of natural therapies in both developing and developed countries. Due to poverty and limited access to modern medicine, about 80% of the world's population, especially in the developing countries, uses herbal medicine as their source of primary healthcare. This was also supported by WHO (2005) where it was found that herbal medicines are often viewed as a balanced and moderate approach to healing. Individuals who use them as home remedies and over-the-counter drugs spend billions of dollars on herbal products. As such, they represent a substantial proportion of the global drug market. To achieve the desired benefit from herbal preparations, an individual must take the required dose over a certain length of time. Although it is generally believed that most herbal preparations are safe for consumption, some herbs, like most biologically active substances, could be toxic with undesirable side effects (Bisset, 1994).

Various advertisements in the mass media, including television and radio programmes have significantly increased consumers' awareness and given the herbal products undue respectability and credibility (Brevort, 1998; Parle and Bansal, 2006). These advertisements are carefully presented to attract the different age groups of people that exist in the society. Children are encouraged to use herbs for their nutritional values to facilitate normal or healthy growth and development; young person's for their euphoric effects, supply of essential ingredients to help them cope with daily stress and to prevent or slow the onset of aging; older persons for their anti-aging or rejuvenating effects and women for slimming and beauty enhancing effects (Parle and Bansal, 2006).

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which people patronize and use herbal medicine in Bodija community?

Table 2: Showing respondents' view with respect to the extent to which people patronize and use herbal medicine in Bodija community

Statements	Yes	No
Have you ever used herbal preparations or medicines in the past?	89.6%	8.8%
Will you prefer seeking treatment from herbal medicine care to other means during sickness?	66.4%	33.6%
Have you ever used herbal medicine, such as plant seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark or flowers for medical purposes?	88.0%	7.2%

Table 2 exhibits that 89.6% of the respondents agreed that they used herbal preparations or medicines in the past, while 8.8% disagreed that they used herbal preparations or medicines in the past, and the remaining 1.6% do not remember if they used herbal preparations or medicines in the past or not. Meanwhile, 66.4% of the respondents usually prefer to seek herbal medicine when sick, and the remaining 33.6% of the respondents would like other means rather than herbal medicine care. Also, 88.0% of the respondents responded positively when asked if they have ever used herbal medicine, such as plant seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark or flowers for medical purposes; while 7.2% denied ever using herbal medicine and 4.8% of the respondents had no idea if they had ever used herbal medicine.

The findings from research question two are in line with the statement by WHO (2004) that the use of herbal medicines continues to expand rapidly across the world with many people now resorting to these products for the treatment of various health challenges in different national healthcare settings. The result correlates with the findings of Bodeker (2005) who found out that up to four billion people (representing 80% of the world's population) living in the

developing world rely on herbal medicinal products as a primary source of healthcare and traditional medical practice which involves the use of herbs is viewed as an integral part of the culture in those communities.

Also, Calapai (2008) found that the most important among many other reasons for seeking herbal therapy is the belief that it will promote healthier living. It however contradicts the study of Ayantunji (2002) who found out that, "the patronage of traditional medicine has increased due to a number of factors, such as poor or non-effectiveness of synthetic drugs which are either fake and adulterated or expired. For instance, chloroquine, as an antidote of malaria, is becoming less powerful as a result of the fake ones now available and the resistance of the malaria parasite." In support of this, (Ojua et al., 2013) also stressed that the problem of fake drugs, inactive or inefficient healing or curative strength of the orthodox services, high cost, and poor distribution, and so on, have made the trado-medical services enjoy high patronage. Furthermore, patients' freedom of choice of a practitioner is also encouraging their utilization of alternative treatments and herbal remedies, although many select herbal medicines from a deductive approach based on anecdotal information, that is, "it worked for my friend or relative" (Parle and Bansal, 2006). Astin (1998) and Zeil (1999) reported that because of the influence of religion and a greater level of spiritual consciousness, many individuals tend to be increasingly disposed to accepting the therapeutic value of a treatment based on faith or intuition rather than scientific reasoning.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community?

Table 3: Showing the respondents' view on the effect of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community

Statement	Yes	No
Do you think herbal medicine has helped in the treatment of disease/illness?	95.2%	4.8%
Do you feel that herbal medicine is more effective compared to orthodox medicine?	69.6%	30.4%
Do you ever experience any adverse side effect(s) with herbal medicine?	33.6%	66.4%
Do you believe that the use of herbal medicine is dangerous to human health?	39.2%	60.8%

Table 3 shows that 95.2% of the respondents perceive that herbal medicine has helped in the treatment of diseases/illness and 4.8% perceive herbal medicine has not helped in the treatment of disease or illness. Also, it shows that 69.6% of the respondents who took part in the study consider herbal medicine more effective and 30.4% consider orthodox medicine more effective. Besides, 66.4% of the respondents have never experienced adverse side effects with the use of herbal medicine, while 33.6% of them have experienced adverse side effects. Finally, 39.2% of the respondents were of the view that the use of herbal medicine is dangerous to human health; while 60.8% of the respondents refuted it.

The result was in tandem with the findings of Clement, et al. (2007) who identified the increasing prevalence of herbal medicine use throughout the world and discovered that 86.6% believed that herbal remedies were equally or more efficacious than orthodox medicines for specific ailments and diseases. Also, the major factor contributing to the increasing popularity of herbs in developed countries and their sustained use in developing countries is the perception that herbal remedies are efficacious, and in some cases

more so than allopathic medicines. It however contradicts the study of Lucas (2010) who reported that herbs believed to have an effect on blood clotting abilities (for example, ginkgo biloba and ginseng) may cause serious side effects for patients with certain blood-related conditions such as haemophilia. High doses of garlic may also enhance the adverse effects of anticoagulant and anti-platelet drugs, including aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix), enoxaparin (Lovenox), and others (IUPAC, 2008).

Research Question 4: Do gender differences influence the patronage and use of herbal medicine among the inhabitants of Bodija community?

Table 4: Showing distribution of respondents' views on gender difference on the usage and patronage of herbal medicine

Statements	SA	A	SD	D
Usage of herbal medicine is more popular among male than female.	52.2%	15%	14%	18.8%
Patronage of herbal medicine is more popular among female than male.	40%	20%	15%	25%

Table 4 shows that 67.2% of the respondents agreed that the usage of herbal medicine is more popular among male than female, while 32.8% of the respondents disagreed that the usage of herbal medicine is more popular among male than female. Also, 60.0% respondents agreed that the patronage of herbal medicine is more popular among female than male, while 40.0% of the respondents disagreed that the patronage of herbal medicine is more popular among female than male. It is inferred from the findings that most men use herbal medicine than women. Most women who are passing through some kinds of illnesses and those of them who are have patronized herbal

medicine dealers at one time or the other, while women generally use herbal medicine.

Conclusion

The survey has made it evidently clear that herbal medicine is highly patronized by the inhabitants of Bodijia community in Ibadan North-East, Oyo State. The survey also demonstrates that users can maintain a parallel set of orientations and may be positively oriented to both herbal and orthodox medicines, and that both systems are not mutually exclusive. The users will always embrace what each of them has to offer so far as its use brings the desired results. Findings indicate that traditional and modern medicines will always be a part of the inhabitants of Bodijia community because it is embedded in the social and cultural setup of the people.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government must make serious efforts to fully integrate traditional herbal medicine into the modern health care delivery system, if its goal of achieving "health for all" is to be realized.
2. Traditional medical practitioners should indeed be incorporated into orthodox medical practice as agents of change rather than antagonists who could hurt the health of the society they treat.
3. A standard health care regulatory framework that cuts across all boards must be set up for all medical practitioners in orthodox and herbal medicine.
4. Traditional herbal practitioners must also embrace the use of scientific standards, so that they can be integrated into the orthodox health care system.
5. All stakeholders (government and individuals/private) must put more effort into tapping herbal medicinal knowledge from indigenous practitioners. By so doing, trainings and educational courses on how to document plants and their therapeutic properties for future generations could be organized for traditional herbal practitioners.

6. It is further suggested that herbal practitioners should be trained in the principles of hygiene, and the branding and packaging of herbal products, and the administration and dosage of drugs.

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