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Scientific evaluation of the use of traditional medicine in rural communities in Uganda

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Traditional medicine has been practiced globally for centuries. In Uganda and the entire sub Saharan Africa in general, a significant number of people seek help on traditional healers mostly, because of its affordability and in cases of presumed failure of modern medicine. There are several compounds with great medical interest and more are to be discovered. Currently, the scientific community has increased its search in compounds responsible for therapeutic effects. Although there are several methods to detect every single compound available in the crude extract as well as its possible biological effect, the cause effect trend can never be determined. One of the reasons being that, the compound of interest, which is taken as a crude extract in the traditional medicine could be in conjugation with other compounds, and therefore, that might have synergistic or additive effects. Some of the challenges of traditional medicine include the lack of proper diagnostic system as well as dosage prescription. In addition, some plants and plant derived products are being used as generics to cure more than one disease. For example, plants such as *Iboza riperia*, *Vernonia mygdalina* and *Leonotis neptotifolia* are frequently used and well renown in central and Southern Africa and can be used to cure headaches, chest pain and even malaria. The purpose of this paper is to create a correlation between indigenous knowledge and belief systems in local communities in regards to the use of traditional medicine as well their met interest in increasing technological outlets as a competitive fashion to the modern medicine. This is mainly true to the rural communities who still consider modern medicine as an alien method of healing.

Biography

Blaise Mazimpaka is a graduate student from Cavendish University, Kampala, Uganda. His research area includes the use of indigenous plants in the pharmaceutical industry. He works closely with different traditional healers in the region to get accurate information on the use of different plants and herbs in traditional medicine. Also he has a great interest in the protection of the environment as well as the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

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