



## African traditional medicine in primary health care

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### Abstract

**Statement of the Problem:** Primary Health Care (PHC) is provided for individuals within a community with a broad range of services from health promotion and prevention to treatment and management of cultural knowledge. This work investigated the extent and role of African traditional medicine including Nigeria. **Methodology and Theoretical Orientation:** The materials and methods used included books, journals, databases, interviews and questionnaires to primary healthcare providers, traditional healers and individuals in different communities. **Findings:** There was evidence of increased interest in herbal medicine among urban and rural dwellers due to improved scientific knowledge, promotional advertisements and trade fairs. Approaches differed according to region and cultural beliefs. Patronage of herbal medicine did not exclude the use of primary health care services where available, but very chronic illnesses were considered to be better handled by traditional healers. **Conclusions and significance:** Although Western medicine is generally accepted in Africa and can be accessed by many, it cannot completely replace indigenous health care but exists in tandem with it. Thus African traditional medicine remains central to the lives of many in both rural and urban areas. Due to the increasing popularity of traditional medicine, it is imperative that a healthy collaboration be established between the PHC practitioners and traditional healers, to augment primary health care services.

### Biography

Josephine Ozioma Ezekwesili-Ofli is a lecturer and researcher in Pharmacological Biochemistry at the Department of Applied Biochemistry, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. She has special research interest in ethnomedicine and medicinal plant pharmacology and toxicology. She is also involved in validation of folkloric claims of medicinal plant action. She is a member of the Association of Scientific Investigation, Conservation and Utilization of Medicinal Plants of Nigeria (ASICUMPON) wherein she interacts with traditional healers and professionals with interest in curative and esoteric effects of plants. She is also a member of the Nigerian Fields Society. She has contributed a book chapter on African traditional medicine in herbal medicine.

### Publication

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