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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION	1C
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS	1F
EDITORIAL NOTES	437
ORIGINAL ARTICLES	
Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies among Adults with Asthma in Ile-Ife, Nigeria	441
A. O. Arawomo, J. O. Erhabor, A. Akinsulore, O. F. Awopeju, A. O. Ajayi, G. E. Erhabor	
A Comparative Study of Uterine Artery Doppler Parameters and Endometrial Characteristics in Women with Unexplained Infertility and Fertile Women at a Nigerian Teaching Hospital	451
A. E. Smart, G. O. Obajimi, A. J. Adekanmi, M. O. Obajimi	
An Evaluation of a Supervised School Tooth Brushing Program on Plaque and Gingival Scores of a Group of Rural Nigerian Primary School Children	459
S. P. Ozoemena, N. K. Onyejaka, E. F. Ani, O. F. Eboh, E. O. Odo	
Correlative Ultrasound Evaluation of Anterior Abdominal Wall Subcutaneous Tissue Thickness in Type 2 Diabetic and Non-Diabetic Adults.....	465
A. A. Adeyekun, J. P. Okojie, M. M. Abubakar, E. E. Efe-Aluta	
Informed Consent: The Surgical Patient's Experience in a Tertiary Hospital in Northwest Nigeria	471
B. A. Grema, S. T. Tanimu, G. C. Michael, I. Aliyu, S. A. Aji, I. U. Takai, A. I. Sulaiman	
Knowledge of Environmental and Genetic Risk Factors for Cleft Lip and Palate among Dwellers of a Suburban Community in Nigeria	479
U. P. Egbunah, A. A. Adekunle, W. L. Adeyemo	
Policy Proposal for Integration of Tobacco Cessation Interventions into Oral Health Care in Dental Settings	486
A. Oyapero, O. Erinoso, O. Olatosi	
Acute Leukaemias in Bauchi State, Northeastern Nigeria: Pattern of Presentations and Clinical Entities	497
R. A. Dachì, F. G. Mustapha, M. Mahdi, H. Abbas	
Correlates of Depression among Elderly Patients Attending the General Out-Patient Department of a Tertiary Hospital in Northwestern Nigeria	501
F. Damagum, B. A. Grema, G. C. Michael	
Use of Herbal Medicine by Rural Residents in Lagos, Nigeria	508
T. M. Oyeleye, I. P. Okafor	
Early Experience of Laparoscopic Surgery in a Teaching Hospital in Rural Nigeria	516
C. C. Adumah, A. O. Mosanya, O. F. Salami, O. K. Apata, I. O. Ogundele, E. C. Onuoha	
Prevalence and Factors Associated with Depression among Resident Doctors in Nigeria: A Multi-Center Study	521
R. E. Obilom, C. T. Amanyam, A. M. Ogunbode, O. A. Mosuro, G. U. Ndukwa, F. M. Onuoha, B. A. Grema, M. D. Akangoziri	
Prevalence and Correlates of Suicidal Ideation among Medical Students in a Tertiary Institution in Southern Nigeria.....	529
B. E. A. Uteh, O. A. Adejumo, R. E. Ogbolu, J. O. Omoaregba, A. A. Akinnuoye	
Severe Cutaneous Adverse Drug Reactions in Children: Epidemiological, Clinical and Etiological Aspects in Dermatology-Venereology Unit at National and Teaching Hospital of Cotonou	538
B. Dégboé, C. Koudoukpo, C. D'Almeida, A. Kouassi, C. Nguessie, F. Akpadjan, H. Adégbidi, F. Atadokpèdé	
MEDICAL EDUCATION FORUM	
Clinical Summary and Reasoning Format: Cognition Levels and Proposal of a Grading System	543
E. A. Disu, A. N. Ikefuna, F. O. Njokanma, K. E. Nkanginieme	
CASE REPORT	
Depression and Suicidality in a Covid-19 Patient: A Case Report from Calabar, Nigeria	548
B. E. Edet, E. A. Essien, M. B. Ugobo, C. J. Okafor, E. O. Olose, V. A. Essien	
INDEX TO VOLUME 39, NO. 5, 2022	
Author Index	552
Subject Index	553



Use of Herbal Medicine by Rural Residents in Lagos, Nigeria

Utilisation de la Phytothérapie par les Résidents Ruraux à Lagos, Nigéria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Medicinal plants have been used for years in daily life all over the world. Herbal medicines (HM) may be beneficial but are not completely harmless especially with unregulated use.

AIM: To assess the knowledge, preference and use of HM in a rural setting, western Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY: This was a cross-sectional study among 417 residents of Epe Local Government Area, Lagos State Nigeria conducted in mid 2016. Respondents were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured pretested interviewer-administered questionnaire and analyzed using Epi- info version 7.1.5.2. Descriptive and inferential statistics were done. P-value of ≤ 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS: Nearly half (48.7%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18-33 years, over three fourths (78.4%) were married and majority (89.2%) were Yoruba. About half 207 (49.6%) of respondents had good knowledge of HM. Over two thirds (67.6%) would use HM as first line treatment and 69.3% perceive it more effective than conventional medicine. Almost all (95.7%) respondents have used HM, majority (87.4%) in the last six months prior to study. Factors significantly associated with knowledge of HM are age ($p=0.001$) and sex of respondents ($p=0.014$). Significant factors influencing HM use include level of education (Fisher's exact $p=0.017$), religion (Fisher's exact $p=0.001$), and ethnicity (Fisher's exact $p<0.001$).

CONCLUSION: Participants were fairly knowledgeable about herbal medicine but most were oblivious of its potential side effects. Majority were HM users mainly because of its perceived effectiveness. There is need for health education in rural areas on the side effects and safe use of herbal medicines. **WAJM 2022; 39(5): 508–515.**

Keywords: Alternative and complimentary medicine, public health, rural, Nigeria, herbal medicine.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: Les plantes médicinales sont utilisées depuis des années au quotidien la vie partout dans le monde. Les médicaments à base de plantes (HM) peuvent être bénéfiques, mais ne sont pas complètement inoffensifs, surtout avec une utilisation non réglementée.

OBJECTIF: Évaluer les connaissances, les préférences et l'utilisation de HM dans un cadre rural, dans l'ouest du Nigéria.

MÉTHODOLOGIE: Il s'agissait d'une étude transversale menée auprès de 417 résidents de la zone d'administration locale d'Epe, État de Lagos Nigéria menée à la mi-2016. Les répondants ont été sélectionnés à l'aide d'une technique d'échantillonnage en plusieurs étapes. Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide d'un questionnaire prétesté administré par l'intervieweur et analysé à l'aide de Epi- info version 7.1.5.2. Les statistiques descriptives et inférentielles étaient faites. La valeur P de $<0,05$ a été considérée comme statistiquement significative.

RÉSULTATS: Près de la moitié (48,7 %) des répondants avaient entre 18 à 33 ans, plus des trois quarts (78,4 %) étaient mariés et la majorité (89,2 %) étaient des Yoruba. Environ la moitié 207 (49,6 %) des répondants avait une bonne connaissance de HM. Plus des deux tiers (67,6 %) utiliseraient HM comme traitement de première intention et 69,3 % le percevaient comme plus efficace que médecine conventionnelle. Presque tous les répondants (95,7 %) ont utilisé HM, majorité (87,4 %) au cours des six derniers mois précédant l'étude. Facteurs significativement associés à la connaissance de HM sont l'âge ($p = 0,001$) et le sexe des répondants ($p = 0,014$). Facteurs importants influençant l'utilisation de HM comprennent le niveau d'éducation (p exact de Fisher = 0,017), la religion (p exact de Fisher = 0,001) et origine ethnique (p exact de Fisher $<0,001$).

CONCLUSION: Les participants connaissaient assez bien les plantes médicinales mais la plupart étaient inconscients de ses effets secondaires potentiels. La majorité étaient des utilisateurs de HM principalement en raison de son efficacité perçue. Il y a un besoin de santé l'éducation dans les zones rurales sur les effets secondaires et l'utilisation sûre des plantes médicinales. **WAJM 2022; 39(5): 508–515.**

Mots-clés: Médecine alternative et complémentaire, santé publique, rural, Phytothérapie, Nigéria.

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Abbreviations: CAM, Complementary and Alternative Medicine; HM, Herbal Medicine; HREC, Health Research Ethics Committee; WHO, World Health Organisation.