The Integration of Traditional and Modern Medicine in Uganda
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Introduction
In Uganda, stark differences in treatment exist from one health center and hospital to another, integrating traditional medical practices, often herbal, and modern, Westernized medicine (WM) that often include pharmaceuticals. 90% of rural Ugandans rely on traditional medicine in their everyday lives, but they are utilized inconsistently. Traditional medicine (TM) knowledge is passed down through generations and varies between districts and villages within Uganda. While traditional medicine professionals are frequently present throughout both urban and rural communities, many herbal remedies are also prepared at home. The use of traditional medicine is still frequently utilized in Uganda with the modernization of medicine, but the herbal treatments lack uniformity and testing for effectiveness.

Purpose
- Compile commonly used traditional medical practices used in Uganda (Fig. 1, 2).
- Compare integrated or replacements for modern medicinal techniques
- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of these practices, in specific comparison to readily available pharmaceutical treatments

Methods
- Secondary data analysis using a systematic literature review
- PubMed and Google Scholar
- Primary search of last 5 years, followed with last 10 years
- Key words: “herb”, “traditional medicine”, “Uganda”, “alternative medicine”, “pregnancy”

Results & Discussion

Common TM plant species in Uganda

Reported TM-Treated Ailments

In the case of maternal healthcare, there are many TM treatments practiced in Uganda, including practices and herbs. Practices can vary from TM, such as the use of a fetoscope and hand palpations during antenatal checkups, to WM, such as the use of an ultrasound machine for antenatal checkups (Fig. 6, 7). The herb Luffa cylindrica (Fig. 8) for induction of labor is very common, and is shown to have stronger oxytocic effects than oxytocin during contractions; however, women using herbs to induce labor are shown to have 15 times greater risk of uterine rupture, often leading to death of the mother and baby.

DISCUSSION

The use of traditional medicine is deeply rooted within Uganda culture. After passing from generation to generation in home rural communities, many herbal remedies are also prepared at home. The use of traditional medicine is still frequently utilized in Uganda with the modernization of medicine, but the herbal treatments lack uniformity and testing for effectiveness.

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