

ABSTRACT

Background: This study was carried out among the adults of Katikekile Sub County in Moroto district. The population of the study area was approximately 1693(Uganda national census2002) the district is largely rural with about 80% of the population living in rural areas and only 20% of the people live in urban areas.

In Uganda generally and in Katikekile Sub County in particular, the use of traditional medicines a common practice. The use of traditional medicine which is medicine that has not been scientifically tested but is believed to have medical ability to cure different ailments in the African society has been the main source of remedy for different ailments which is the theme of this study.

The objective of this study was to determine the factors influencing the use of traditional medicines among the adults of Katikekile Sub County in Moroto district.

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional study involving the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. This is because it aimed at obtaining data on a representative sample from the study population at a specific time.

In this study, multiple (simple random and Probability Proportionate to Size) sampling method was used to interview 323 respondents. The Sub County was divided into four. That is; East, West, South and North, corresponding to the administrative areas of the local councils. To obtain a non-biased number of subjects from each selected zone, a probability proportional to size (PPS) method was applied to estimate the number of respondents to interview from each zone based on the estimated population of each area. The houses from each zone was numbered and randomly selected by balloting the house numbers. Then one adult from each household who was willing to participate and qualifies per inclusion criteria in the study was interviewed.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were also used and this involved adults from Katikekile sub-county such as the village traditional birth attendants, health officials at village level, known village health team (VHT), Traditional health providers/ herbalist who were both male and female, traditional

birth attendants were purely women and Village health Team were both male and female. In the findings the use of Traditional Medicine (TM) among the adults of Katikekile sub-county was in line with the discoveries in other studies done by World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) that showed that 70% of all Ugandans use TM as their first line medicine for the treatment of any health ailment. The findings of the study also revealed outthat the use of TM has been a beneficial alternative medication for populations which cannot access health care mainly due to physical access to health facility since some areas are hard-to-reach areas or the high costs attached to health services. Yet given the high level of poverty which is prevalent in many households in Katikekile sub county in Moroto district, as well as among other Ugandan populations where people cannot afford the modern health care influences people to use TM.

In conclusion the use of traditional medicine among the adults of Kitikekile sub-county was high. Majority of the adults used traditional medicine often as their first line-treatment for any illness. However, there are challenges involved in the use of TM for both the individual users and the entire health system at large. Such challenges include: lack of mechanism for measuring accurate doses when using herbs; limited scientific research to establish the effectiveness and efficacy; the risk of developing drug-resistant restrain of disease and limited disease notification rate at both regional and national levels.

The findings of this study recommend that the government through the ministry of health to increase the awareness among the public on the use of traditional medicines especially on the dangers and effects to the individual users and the national health system at large.

Key Words

Use of traditional medicine, Adults, Uganda, Katikekile sub county, Moroto district.