Traditional herbal medicine use among people living with HIV/AIDS in Gondar, Ethiopia: do their health care providers know?

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Abstract

Background: People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are increasingly using herbal remedies due to the chronic nature of the disease, the complexities of treatment modalities and difficulty in adhering to the therapeutic regimens. However, research on herbal medicine use in this patient Population is scarce in Ethiopia. The present study aimed at investigating the prevalence and factors associated with the use of traditional herbal medicine among people living with HIV/AIDS in Gondar, Ethiopia

Methods: A cross sectional survey was conducted on 360 PLWHA attending the outpatient clinic of University of Gondar referral and teaching hospital from September 1 to 30, 2016. A questionnaire about the socio-demographic, disease characteristics as well as traditional herbal medicine use was filled by the respondents. Descriptive statistics, univariate and multivariate logistic regression tools were performed to determine prevalence and correlates of herbal medicine use.

Results: Out of 396 respondents, 255 (71.1%) used traditional herbal medicine. The most common herbal preparations used by PLWHA were Ginger (Zingiber officinale) (47%), Garlic (Allium sativum L.) (40.8%) and Moringa (Moringa stenopetala) (31.4%). Majority of herbal medicine users rarely disclose their use of herbal medicines to their health care providers(61.2%). Only higher educational status was found to be strong predictors of herbal medicine use in the multivariate logistic regression.

Conclusions: The use of herbal medicine among PLWHA is a routine practice and associated with a higher educational status. Patients also rarely disclose their use of herbal medicines to their health care providers. From the stand point of high prevalence and low disclosure rate, health care providers should often consult patients regarding herbal medicine use.

Key words: Traditional herbal medicine, HIV/AIDS, Gondar, Ethiopia