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Traditional medicine and pregnancy management: Perceptions of traditional health practitioners in capricorn district limpopo province, South Africa

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Abstract

Treatment with traditional medicine during pregnancy is believed to prevent miscarriage, ensure proper growth of the foetus. It further ensures stability of the woman's health and to strengthen the womb against witchcraft and to prevent childhood illnesses. The purpose of the study was to determine how Traditional Health Practitioners perceive their management of pregnant women with traditional medicine in Polokwane municipality Capricorn district of Limpopo province. A qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design was used. A non-probability purposive, snowball sampling method was used to select participants.Eight Traditional Health Practitioners voluntarily consented to participate in the study. Data was collected at participants' home through unstructured face-to-face interview for about forty five minutes to one hour. The central question was "could you describe how do you manage pregnant mothers with traditional medicine during pregnancy?".The narrative data from in-depth interviews were analysed qualitatively using open coding method. Theme and sub-themes emerged, namely; Traditional medicine used during 1st, 2nd and 3rd trimesters.

Recommendations: Contextual health information sessions by health professionals should be held with the THPs, to empower them on the potential risk to the foetus when the mother is given traditional medicine while pregnant. Health education and promotion interventions to focus on safe utilisation of traditional medicine during pregnancy. Pregnant women should be discouraged from self-medication and taking the traditional medicine.

Keywords: Traditional medicine, pregnancy, trimester, management, Traditional Health Practitioners

Biography

Sonto Maputle has completed her PhD in 2004 from the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She is an advanced midwife, Professor and the Researcher at the School of Health sciences, University of Venda in South Africa. She has published more than 30 papers in reputed journals and a reviewer for reputed journals.Her interest: Cultural and traditional practices of Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science.