

Prevalence and Factors Associated With Concurrent Use of Herbal Medicine and Anti-retroviral Therapy Among HIV/Aids Patients Attending Selected HIV Clinics in Wakiso District

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Abstract : Background: Worldwide, there were 36.7 million people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in 2015, up from 35 million at the end of 2013. Wakiso district is one of the hotspots for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) infection in Uganda, with the prevalence of 8.1 %. Herbal medicine has gained popularity among Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) patients as adjuvant therapy to reduce the adverse effects of ART. Regardless of the subsidized and physical availability of the Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART), majority of Africans living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) resort to adding to their ART traditional medicine. Result found out from a pilot observation made by the PI that indicate 13 out of 30 People Living with AIDS (PLWA) who are attending Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) clinics in Wakiso district reported to be using herbal preparations despite the fact that they were taking Anti Retro Viral (ARVs) this prompted this study to be done. Purpose of the study: To determine the prevalence and factors associated with concurrent use of herbal medicine and anti-retroviral therapy among HIV/AIDS patients attending selected HIV clinics in Wakiso district. Methodology: This was a cross sectional study with both quantitative data collection (use of a questionnaire) and qualitative data collection (key informants' interviews). A mixed method of sampling was used, that is, purposive and random sampling. Purposive sampling was based on the location in the district and used to select 7 health facilities basing on the 7 health sub districts from Wakiso. Simple random sampling was used to select one HIV clinic from each of the 7 health sub districts. Furthermore, the study units were enrolled in to the study as they entered into the HIV clinics, and 105 respondents were interviewed. Both manual and computer packages (SPSS) were used to analyze the data Results: The prevalence of concurrent use of herbal medicine and ART was 38 (36.2%). Commonly HIV symptom treated with herbs was fever 27(71.1%), diarrhea 3(7.9%) and cough 2(5.3%). Commonly used herbs for fever (Omululuza (Vernonica amydalina), Ekigagi (Aloe sp), Nalongo (Justicia betonica Linn) while for diarrhea was Ntwatwa. The side effects also included; too much pain, itchy pain of HIV, aneamia, felt sick, loss/gain appetite, joint pain and bad dreams. Herbs used to sooth the side effects were; for aneamia was avocado leaves Pareia Americana mill The significant factors associated with concurrent use of herbal medicine were being familiar with herbs and conventional medicine for management HIV symptoms being expensive. The other significant factor was exhibiting hostility to patients by health personnel providing HIV care. Conclusion: Herbal medicine is widely used by clients in HIV/AIDS care. Patients being familiar with herbs and conventional medicine being expensive were associated with concurrent use of herbal medicine and ART. The exhibition of hostility to the HIV/AIDS patients by the health care providers was also associated with concurrent use of herbal medicine and ART among HIV/AIDS patients.

Keywords : HIV patients, herbal medicine, antiretroviral therapy, factors associated

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