

High Blood Pressure and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Study on Lay Understandings and Uses of Pharmaceuticals and Medicinal Plants for Treatment in Matzikama Municipal Region, Western Cape, South Africa

Authors : Diana Gibson

Abstract : Aim: The first aim of the study was to ascertain the percentage of people who had been diagnosed with High Blood Pressure and/ or Type2 Diabetes Mellitus in Matzikama municipal district, Western Cape, South Africa. These two conditions are reportedly very high in this particular province, even though few statistics are available. A second aim was to gain insight into the understanding of these two conditions among sufferers. A third aim was to determine their allopathic use as well as indigenous medicinal plants to manage these conditions. A fourth aim was to understand how users of medicinal plants attend to their materiality and relationality as a continuum between humans and plants. The final aim was to ascertain the conservation status of medicinal plants utilised. Methods: One thousand one hundred and eighty-four (1184) respondents were interviewed. Semi-structured surveys were utilised to gather data on the percentage of people who had been medically diagnosed with High Blood Pressure and/or Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Local healers and knowledgeable old people were subsequently selected through a non-probability snowball sampling method. They were helped with plant collection. The plants were botanically identified. Results: The study found that people who have been diagnosed with High Blood Pressure or Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus drew on and continuously moved between biomedical and local understandings of these conditions. While they followed biomedical treatment regimens as far as possible they also drew on alternative ways of managing it through the use of medicinal plants. The most commonly used plant species overall were *Lessertia frutescens*, *Tulbaghia violacea*, *Artemisia afra* and *Leonotus leonurus*. For the users, medicinal plants were not mere material entities, they were actants in social networks where knowledge was produced through particular practices in specific places. None of the identified plants are currently threatened. Significance: Sufferers had a good understanding of the symptoms of and biomedical treatment regime for both conditions, but in everyday life they adhered to their local understandings and medicinal plants for treatment. The majority used reportedly used prescribed medication as well as plant alternatives.

Keywords : diabetes, high blood pressure, medicine, plants

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020