



Comparative Effectiveness of Traditional Herbal Medicine and Western Pharmaceuticals in Diarrhea Treatment Among Ethiopian Rural Communities

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Abstract

Diarrhea is a common health issue in rural Ethiopia where traditional herbal medicine (THM) is widely used alongside or instead of Western pharmaceuticals. Understanding which treatment approach is more effective can guide healthcare policies and improve patient outcomes. A systematic literature review was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Cochrane Library, and Google Scholar. Studies were included if they reported comparative outcomes of THM vs. Western medicines in treating diarrhea in Ethiopia's rural areas. Methodological quality was assessed using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS). Community surveys indicated that both treatment modalities are preferred by patients for their perceived safety and efficacy, with a significant proportion (75%) of respondents favoring THM due to its affordability. The review found no statistically significant difference in effectiveness between THM and Western pharmaceuticals, suggesting further research is needed to explore other factors influencing patient choice. Given the preference for THM by rural communities, healthcare providers should consider integrating it into existing treatment protocols as a supplementary option. Future studies should examine long-term efficacy and safety profiles of both approaches. Treatment effect was estimated with $\text{text}\{ \text{logit} \}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta^T p X_i$, and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

Keywords: African, comparative, ethnobotany, efficacy, intervention, prevalence, randomized

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