



Traditional Medicine's Role in Contemporary Tanzanian Healthcare Systems: An Exploratory Study

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Published: 26 November 2004 | **Received:** 21 August 2004 | **Accepted:** 15 October 2004

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18799615](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18799615)

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Abstract

Traditional medicine plays a significant role in healthcare systems across sub-Saharan Africa, including Tanzania. In Tanzania, traditional healers and practices have coexisted with modern health services for centuries. However, their integration into contemporary healthcare structures is often under-researched. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of traditional healers ($n=20$), *community leaders*, *government officials*, and *healthcare providers*. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in responses. Traditional medicine practitioners reported that approximately 45% of their patients also use modern health services. Community leaders identified a need for better integration between traditional and modern healthcare facilities. Government officials highlighted the importance of policy support for traditional healers. The findings suggest a complex interplay between traditional medicine and modern healthcare in Tanzania, with potential for enhanced collaboration to improve overall healthcare access and quality. Recommendations include improving infrastructure for traditional health centers, ensuring regulatory frameworks are supportive of both traditional and modern practices, and fostering dialogue between practitioners from different sectors.

Keywords: *African Geography, Traditional Healers, Cultural Medicine, Ethnography, Community Health, Anthropology, Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

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