



A Systematic Review of Sustainable Medicinal Practices in Kenya: An African Perspective,

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Abstract

The integration of sustainable medicinal practices within formal healthcare systems is a significant concern in sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya, a substantial heritage of traditional medicine coexists with modern biomedical systems, presenting both opportunities and complexities for sustainable healthcare delivery. This systematic review aimed to synthesise existing literature on sustainable medicinal practices in Kenya from an African perspective. Its primary objective was to identify, evaluate, and summarise documented sustainable approaches within the country's healthcare landscape. A systematic literature review was conducted following established guidelines. Multiple academic databases were searched for peer-reviewed articles, reports, and relevant grey literature. Studies were screened against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, with data extracted and analysed thematically. The review identified several key themes. A prominent finding was the central role of community-based conservation and ethical wild harvesting of medicinal plants. Other significant themes included the integration of traditional birth attendants into maternal health programmes and the development of local phytomedicine enterprises. These practices were found to be largely community-driven and closely linked to biodiversity conservation. Sustainable medicinal practices in Kenya are deeply connected to cultural knowledge and ecological stewardship. Their potential for enhancing healthcare resilience is considerable, though they often operate in parallel to, rather than being integrated with, the formal public health sector. Future efforts should prioritise the development of supportive policy frameworks that formally recognise these practices. Further research is needed to document clinical efficacy and standardise preparations, alongside initiatives to strengthen the sustainable cultivation of medicinal plants. Sustainable medicine, traditional medicine, Kenya, healthcare integration,

medicinal plants, systematic review This review consolidates the evidence on sustainable medicinal practices in Kenya, providing a synthesised resource for policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and researchers working towards culturally relevant and ecologically sound healthcare solutions.

Keywords: *Traditional medicine, Sustainable healthcare, Sub-Saharan Africa, Health systems integration, Ethnopharmacology, Kenya*

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