

**THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND USE OF HERBAL
MEDICINAL PLANTS AMONG HEALTH CARE
WORKERS: A PILOT STUDY**

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INTRODUCTION AND

LITERATURE

Definition

- Herbs are any plants used for food, flavoring, medicine, or fragrances for their savory or aromatic properties.
- Medicinal plants may be defined as those plants that are commonly used in treating and preventing specific ailments and diseases that are generally considered to be harmful to humans which active ingredient is contained in the aerial (leaves, stem, bark, and seeds) or underground parts (roots) of plants, or other plant material or combinations.

Introduction

- According to the World Health Organization (2002), up to 80% of persons living in Africa, use traditional medicines, especially herbal medicine for their primary healthcare needs.
- In Nigeria, as noted in the World Health Assembly resolution 56.31 (WHO, 2003), herbal medicine is partially recognized as forming a part of the national health delivery system.

- When considering the extremely high and long-time of new drug development, more attention has been focused on herbal medicine.
- The overall quality of healthcare delivery especially relating to possible adverse effects of herbs and herb-drug interactions will depend on the level of knowledge and attitude that the physician will have towards herbal medicines (Clement et al., 2005).

Objectives

- To evaluate the knowledge, attitude and use of herbal medicinal plants among health practitioners in Medical village, Ondo state, South Western Nigeria.

Method

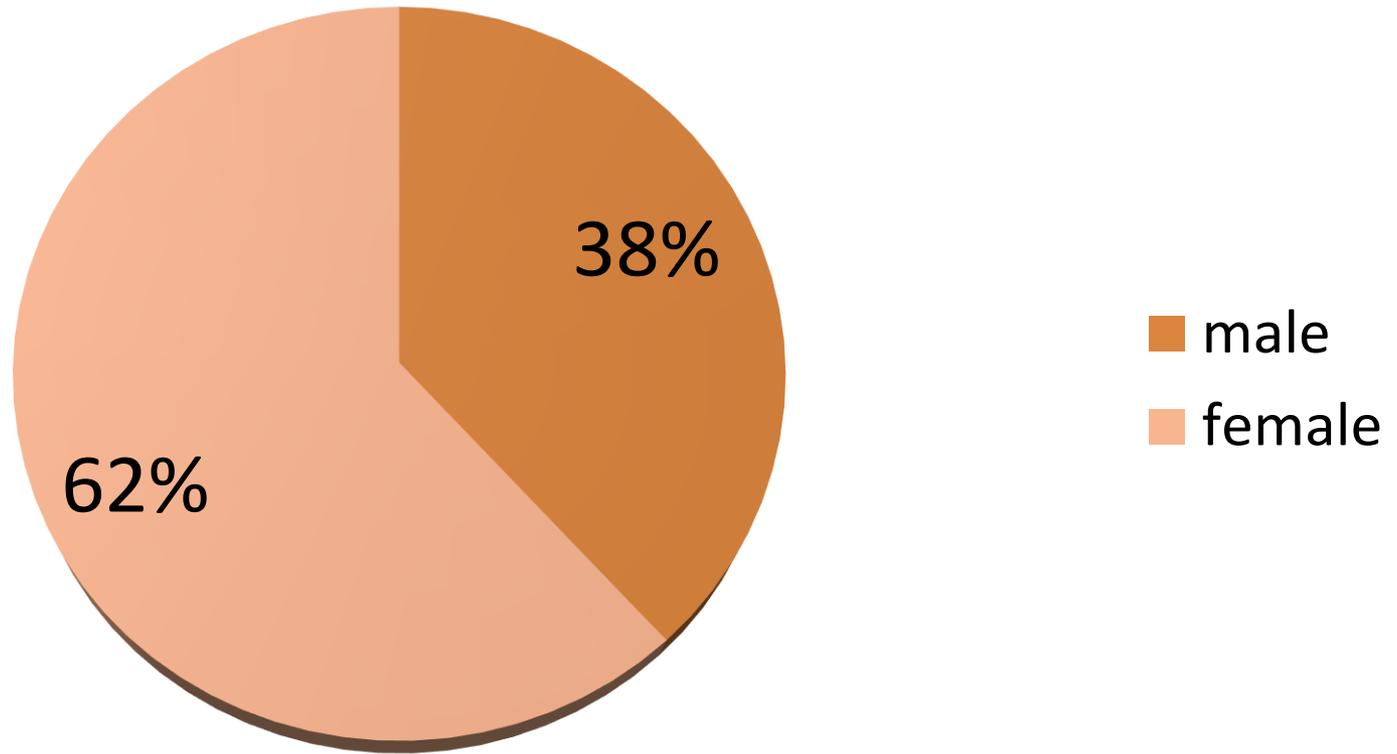
- A semi-structured questionnaire was interviewer administered to a total of 34 health workers comprising of doctors, nurses and pharmacists.
- The respondents were recruited from 3 hospitals in the Medical village: Kidney Care Centre, Mother and Child Hospital and Trauma and Surgical Centre.

Method

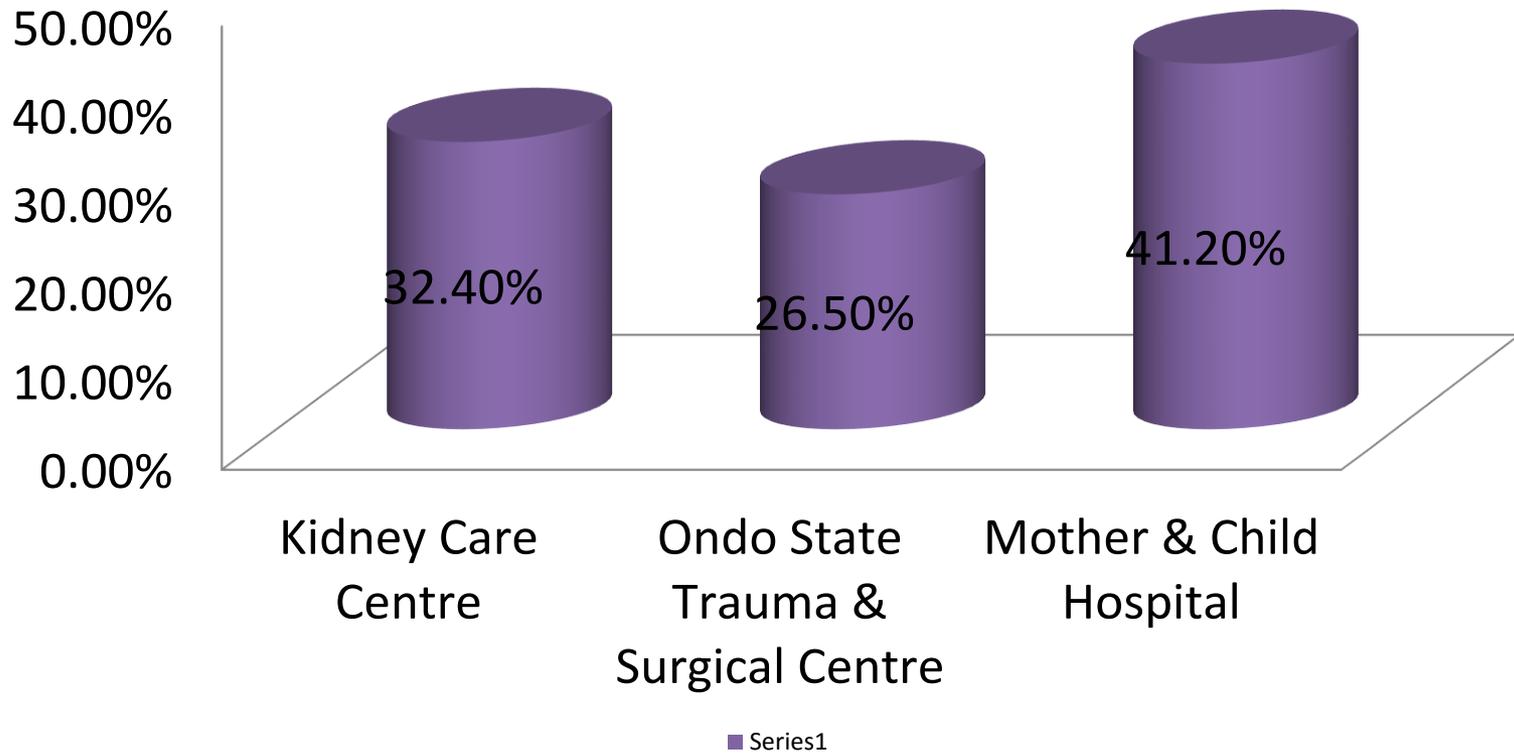
- The questionnaire assessed knowledge, attitude and use of herbal medicinal plants within the last 12 months prior to the study.
- All questionnaires were cross-checked to ensure completeness, and analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS

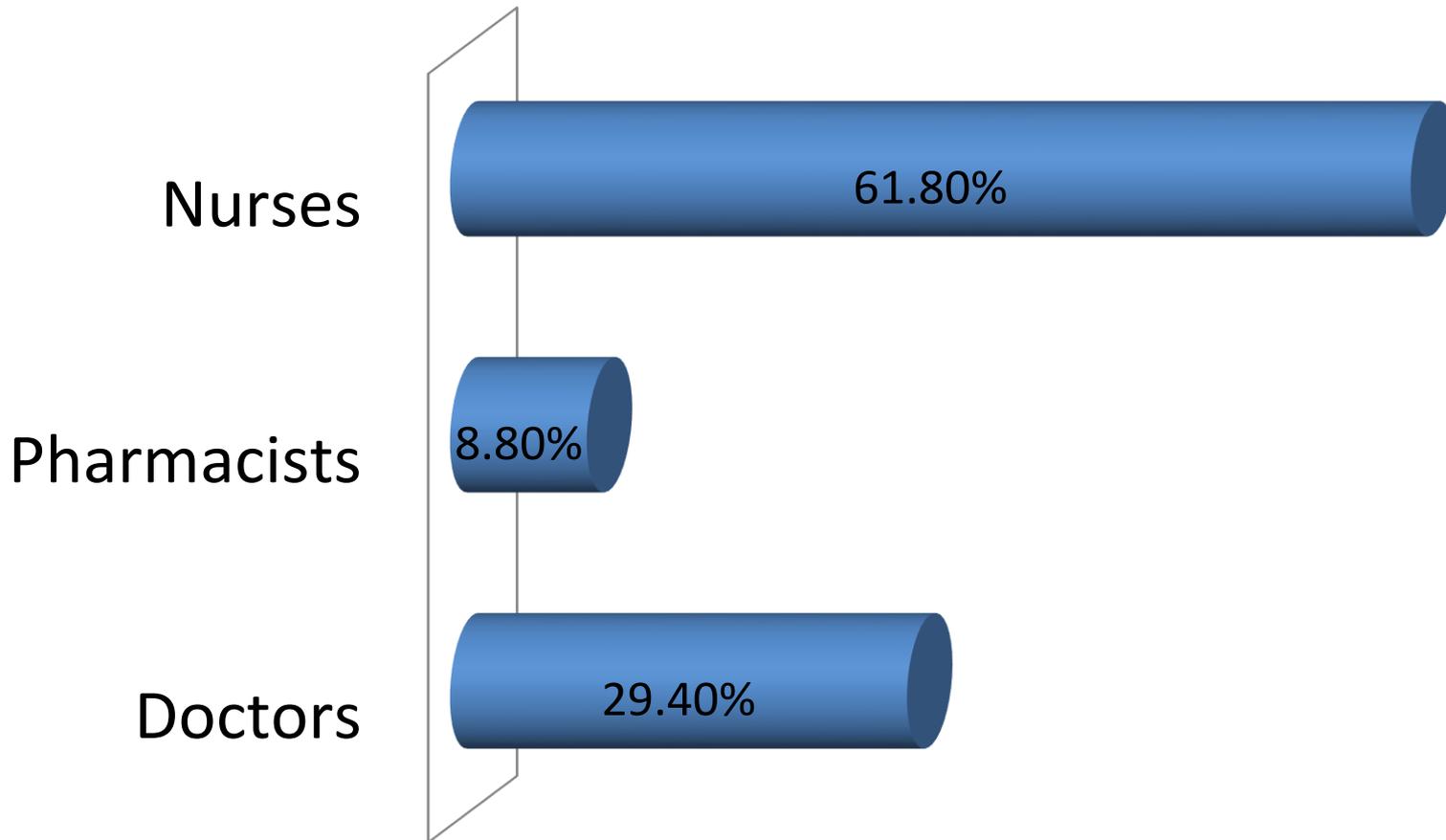
Gender Distribution of Subjects



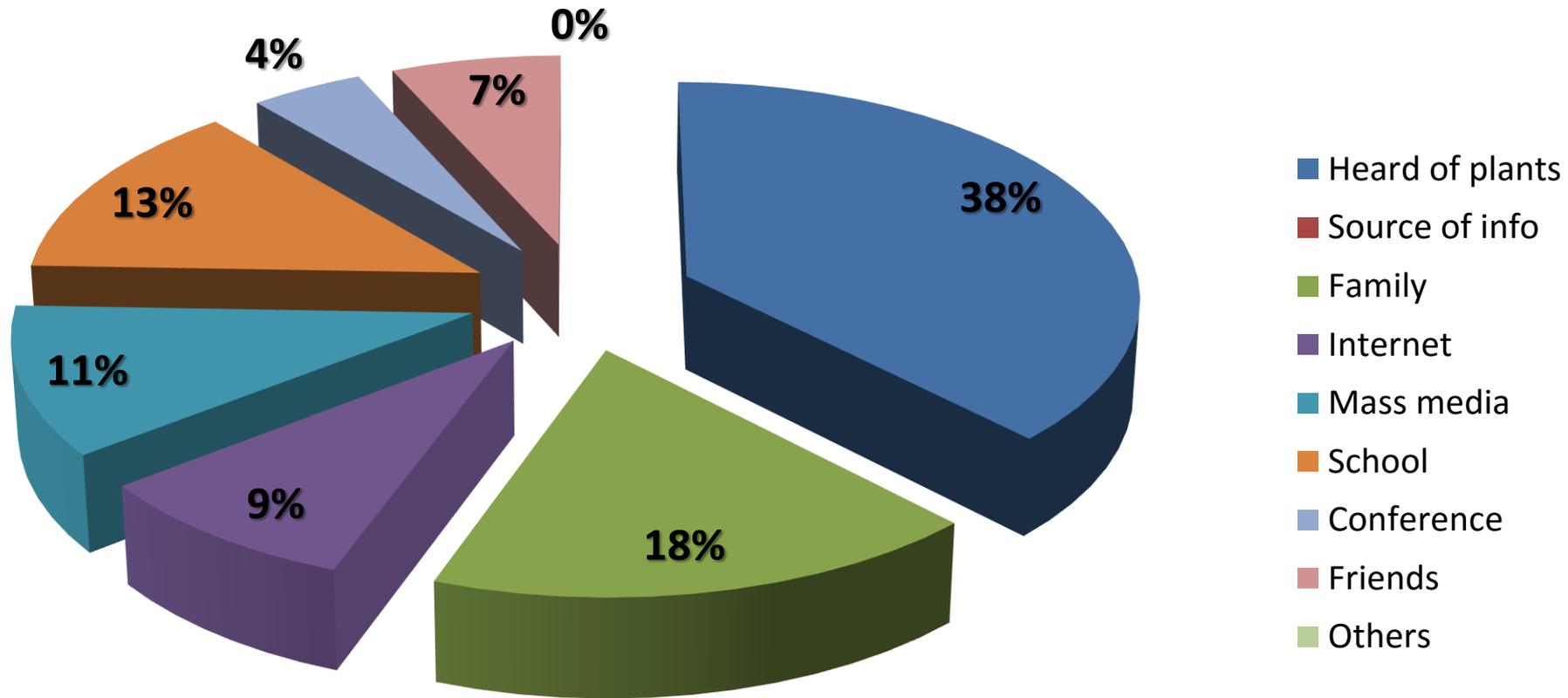
Distribution of Subjects by Centres



Distribution across profession



Sources of Information



KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH WORKERS ON USES OF COMMON TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS

USES	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW
MORINGA			
Hypertension	13 (39.4)	1 (3.0)	19 (57.6)
Cough	9 (27.3)	1 (3.0)	23 (69.7)
Infertility	6 (19.4)	3 (9.7)	22 (71.0)
Liver diseases	4 (12.5)	4 (12.5)	24 (75.0)
GINGER			
Boil	5 (15.2)	2 (6.1)	26 (78.8)
Stomach ache	10 (31.3)	4 (12.5)	18 (56.3)
Malaria	5 (15.2)	9 (27.3)	19 (57.6)
Sore throat	15 (45.5)	1 (3.0)	17 (51.5)

KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH WORKERS ON USES OF COMMON TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS

USES	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW
GARLIC			
Catarrh	13 (43.3)	1 (3.3)	16 (53.4)
Kidney problems	4 (12.5)	8 (25.0)	20 (62.5)
Joint pains	8 (25.0)	4 (12.5)	20 (62.5)
Constipation	17 (51.5)	1 (3.0)	15 (45.5)
BITTER LEAF			
Typhoid	11 (34.4)	6 (18.8)	15 (46.8)
Malaria	14 (42.4)	6 (18.2)	13 (39.4)
Fever	8 (25.8)	9 (29.0)	14 (45.2)
Diarrhea	12 (35.3)	6 (17.6)	16 (47.1)

KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH WORKERS ON USES OF COMMON TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS

	YES	NO
Attendance of conference on Traditional Medicinal plants n=34	5 (14.7)	29 (85.3)
Awareness of existing herbal pharmacopoeia n=28	4 (14.3)	24 (85.7)
Awareness of clinical trial on medicinal plant efficacy n=27	7 (25.9)	20 (74.1)

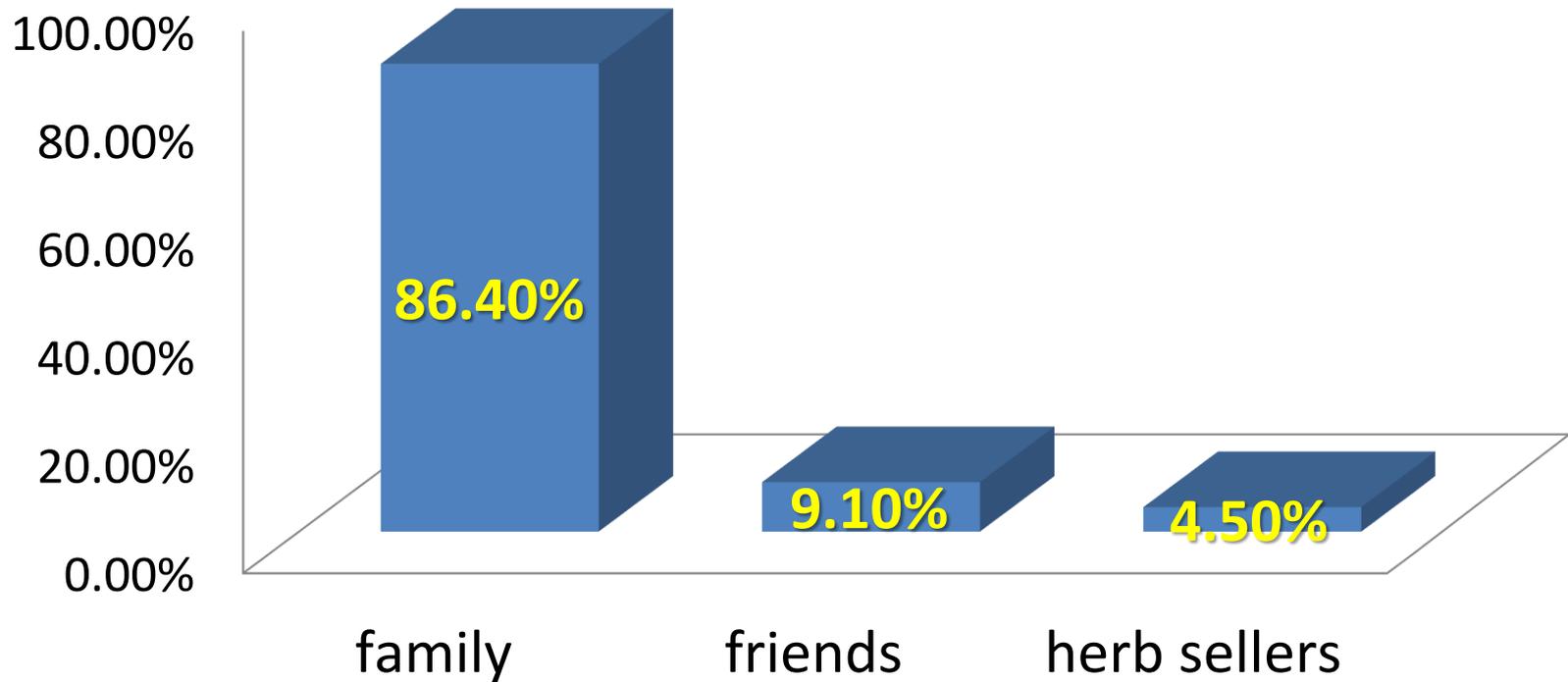
Attitude towards medicinal plants

	YES	NO
Med plants are beneficial in health care n=33	22 (66.7)	11 (33.3)
Only use herbal medicine if conventional therapy fails n=33	7 (21.2)	26 (78.8)
Include Herbal medicine in school curriculum n=32	26 (81.3)	6 (18.7)
Willingness to participate in traditional med clinical trials n=33	25 (75.8)	8 (24.2)
Separate consulting rooms n= 32	7 (21.9)	25 (78.1)

Usage of Medicinal Plants

	YES Freq (%)	NO Freq (%)
Personal usage of herbal medicinal plant since qualification n=34	26 (76.4)	16 (23.6)
Satisfaction with outcome of usage n=23	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)
Recommendation of herbal medicine to patients n=33	9 (27.3)	24 (72.7)
Referral of patients to a herb seller n=34	1 (2.9)	33 (97.1)
Asking patients about previous traditional medicine usage n=32	29 (90.6)	3 (9.4)

Source of recommendation of usage of medicinal Plants



GRADING OF KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS

SCORES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
0-7	30	88.2
8-14	4	11.8
15-20	0	

Conclusion

- Health workers in this study possessed good attitude but poor knowledge of herbal medicines.
- This deficit of knowledge in herbal medicine if not changed will limit physicians' ability to elicit information on the use of herbs and their products which may influence their decisions in the safe and efficient management of ailments.

Recommendations

- The good attitude exhibited by the health workers shows possible acceptance and therefore the introduction of training and continuous training on herbal medicine .
- Introduction of herbal medicine courses into medical curriculum and thereby minimize their resistance to the integration of herbal medicine into the current conventional health delivery system in Nigeria.

- ✓ Incorporation as an integral part of a country's formal health care system, with each being separately recognized as legitimate forms of health care within the same framework.
- ✓ Integration of both Herbal and orthodox medicine as two branches of medical science, with the ultimate incorporation of elements of both to form a new branch.



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