

Validation of African Ethnomedicine for Sustainable Development and Universal Health Access

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Abstract

African ethnomedicine represents a vast repository of indigenous knowledge systems that have sustained healthcare delivery for centuries. Despite its widespread use across the continent, particularly in rural and underserved communities, its integration into formal healthcare systems remains limited due to insufficient scientific validation, standardization, and policy support. This paper explores the validation of African ethnomedicine as a strategic pathway toward achieving sustainable development and universal health access.

The study synthesizes ethnobotanical data, phytochemical analyses, pharmacological evaluations, and clinical evidence to assess the efficacy, safety, and scalability of selected medicinal plants commonly used in African traditional medicine. It further examines the socio-cultural, economic, and ecological dimensions of ethnomedicine, highlighting its role in affordable healthcare delivery, biodiversity conservation, and local economic empowerment.

The findings demonstrate that scientifically validated ethnomedicinal practices can significantly contribute to bridging healthcare gaps, reducing dependence on imported pharmaceuticals, and promoting culturally acceptable health interventions. However, challenges such as lack of regulatory frameworks, intellectual property concerns, and erosion of indigenous knowledge persist.

The paper aligns with key Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). It proposes a multidisciplinary validation framework integrating scientific research, policy development, and community engagement to facilitate the mainstreaming of African ethnomedicine into modern healthcare systems.