

A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE PREVALENCE AND EFFECT OF TRADITIONAL
HERBAL MEDICINE USAGE AMONG PATIENTS ON HIGHLY ACTIVE
ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY IN THIKA LEVEL 5 HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS patients have been known to use Complimentary/alternative medicine (CAM) all over the world. The use of CAM by HIV/AIDS patient is due to complex health and social issues associated with this disease. The use of CAM by HIV/AIDS patient have been reported to affect the compliance of patient to anti-retroviral therapy (ARVs) in addition to high risk of causing herb-drug interaction when taken concurrently with highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART). However, even though concurrent use of CAM with HAART is known among HIV/AIDS, the extent to which this it happens and their success in management of HIV/AIDS is not known in most settings. This study was conducted to investigate the prevalence and success rate, if any, of herbal medicine use in combination with HAART in the management of HIV/AIDS. This study was a cross-sectional study carried out in Thika Level 5 District Hospital among 100 randomly selected eligible participants. Similar number of patients who were not using herbal medicine will be used as a control. Participants who are 18 years and above, enrolled on HAART, and who will consent to participate are the only once to be included. Data was collected using a researcher-administered semi-structured questionnaire. 31% of all interviewed patients had used at least one traditional herbal medicine (THM) in their life time. 25% out of the all interviewed patients were found to use THM while on highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). 68% of the 25% respondents who were using THM believe that THM are effective while 32% believes they are not effective. Most interviewed patients reported to use the THM to treat drugs side effects and HIV symptoms. 72% of the patients who had never used THM believe they are not effective. Parameters such as disease stage, viral load and CD4 count which are used to check disease progress showed that use of the THM was seems to be beneficial, though such a finding cannot be substantiated since there was a significant difference in years since diagnosis and the small sample size. Recommendation of this study is that further research including more patients and adequate controls needs to be conducted.