

Traditional Health Care System and Challenges in Developing Ethnopharmacology in Africa: Example of Oku, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT Most traditional African Cultures believe that, to maintain the health and vitality of human beings, they have to address forces in both the natural and the spiritual world. The paper uses a combination of primary and secondary data sources to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the traditional health system. It presents some concepts and practices, some characteristics of indigenous knowledge transfer system and some aspects of their link with the Western health care system. The paper concludes that the traditional health system is very complex. Failure to understand and appreciate these complexities has led to a great number of failures in the cooperation between African traditional medicine and the Western health care system. It therefore identifies the scope to enhance the strengths and challenge the weakness of the traditional practices. It recommends that there is a need to research for methods of testing, refining and validating indigenous knowledge in traditional medicine in order to support the process of integration in the Western health care system.