

**Pre-selection of Traditional Medicine for Clinical Trials in
Developing Countries Through the Use of Information
and Communication Technology (ICT):
A Case Study of South Africa Health Department**

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ABSTRACT A high percentage of South African population depends on traditional medicine for treatment but no clinical and scientific validation has been documented in terms of quality, safety, timely and effectiveness of this traditional medicine for treatment. This paper investigated the methods of pre-clinical trials of traditional medicine (herbs) by the health department of North West Province of South Africa. A case study approach was used. Six participants were drawn from an entire population of doctors who are members of the Traditional Medical Council of South Africa and members of Food and Drug Board of South Africa. Data was collected using semi-structured open-ended interview questions to inquire about pre-selection methods for pharmaceutical drugs for clinical trial; pre-selection methods for traditional medicine (herbs) for clinical trial and how effectiveness and the risk factor of any drug is determined. The findings revealed that pre-clinical trial methods are the same for both pharmaceutical drugs and traditional medicine. Both pre-clinical phase use human and animals as subjects of the trial. However participants approached to partake in pre-clinical trial of traditional medicine were reluctant to volunteer because of lack of time, adverse effect of trial on their personal health and uncertainty of Compensation for Occupational Injuries. It became evident that no traditional medicines have been tested on human to be registered with the Medicines Control Council or be prescribed as treatments for any disease in South Africa. The results led to a proposed Pre-clinical Traditional Medicine ICT Framework (PTM-ICT Framework) to collect data on traditional medicine (herbs) directly from the general public and Traditional Medicine Practitioners to ascertain the safety and efficacy of that herb to serve as information needed at pre-selected stage of clinical trial of traditional medicine.