



Research Report | WHO

Forum: World Health Organization

Issue: The Issue of Illicit Traditional Medicine and Integration of Traditional Healing Practices into Mainstream Healthcare System

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Welcome Letter

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we extend a warm welcome to each of you to the World Health Organization of SISCMUN 2024. As the chairs of this esteemed assembly, we are truly honored to have the opportunity to preside over such a vital forum dedicated to global health and well-being.

Your presence here signifies a shared commitment to address health challenges facing our world today. Over the course of this conference, the chairs hope to see engagement in rigorous debate, and collaborative problem-solving to develop innovative solutions. We encourage you to approach this experience with an open mind, a spirit of cooperation, and dedication. Thank you for your passion, and commitment to the mission of the World Health Organization.

With warm regards,



Head Chair

World Health Organization Model United Nations Conference

Background

Usage of traditional medicine and healing practices are quite prominent in every part of the world. These types of traditional medical materials are generally not harmful to society. However, as the world progresses, the integration of traditional healing methods into the mainstream healthcare system and illicit traditional medicine became an intricate and complicated issue. The knowledge, ability, and practice of traditional medicine are derived from the ideas, convictions, and life experiences that are inherent to various cultures. It includes a wide range of therapeutic techniques, including herbal medicine, acupuncture, traditional massage, and spiritual healing.

Traditional medicine is an important aspect of providing healthcare to the public in many parts of the world, especially in areas where access to contemporary medical services is limited or where traditional healing methods are valued due to cultural beliefs. But in addition to the accepted practice of traditional medicine, there is a booming black market for illegal traditional medicines that, because of a lack of oversight and quality control, can seriously endanger the health of users.

There are opportunities and obstacles associated with incorporating traditional healing methods into established healthcare systems. On the one hand, traditional medicine's potential advantages—such as its ability to offer culturally sensitive care, supplement conventional therapies, and increase access to healthcare services—are becoming increasingly acknowledged in relation to the integration of traditional medicine into comprehensive healthcare initiatives.



However, there are also worries about maintaining the security, effectiveness, and morality of conventional therapeutic methods. Additionally, questions of cultural appropriation and respect for indigenous knowledge systems must be addressed.

These health practices has developed mainly due to cultural diversity and historical migrations. It can also be seen that the issue have continuously grown due to the lack and difficulties in regulatory measures regarding the issue of illicit traditional medicine and integration of traditional healing practices into mainstream healthcare systems. Overall, because of the interconnectedness of societies, the diversity of healthcare needs, and the realization of the value of traditional knowledge in addressing modern health challenges, the globalization of traditional medicine and the integration of traditional healing practices into mainstream healthcare systems have become pressing global issues. Therefore, it is seen that international collaboration, respect for cultural variety, and indigenous rights are all necessary to address these concerns.

Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Traditional Medicine	Medical practices which involve cultural theories and beliefs integrated in those practices
Illicit Traditional Medicine	Traditonal medicine which were provided through illegal distribution and sales or which were produced in non permitted systems.
Mainstream Healthcare Systems	This refers to the most universal healthcare system which most people have access to
Cultural Sensitivity	This refers to the sensitivity of cultural beliefs and tradition



Indigenous Knowledge	This refers to the knowledge which were used in production of these traditional medical systems
Public Health	This refers to the health of the citizens or the public

Major Parties Involved

China:

TCM, or traditional Chinese medicine, has been practiced for hundreds of years and is ingrained in Chinese society. When it comes to incorporating TCM into the mainstream medical system, China has led the way. TCM has been a very famous healthcare system in China, although numerous unsettlements are existing regarding the truth behind health benefits and if and if they are really produced in an ethical manner. Concerns have been raised, nevertheless, regarding the unethical methods connected to some traditional treatments and the illegal trade in endangered animals.

India:

The recognition of Ayurveda, Siddha, and other traditional treatment methods as part of the nation's healthcare system is based on their long history. India has been actively promoting the incorporation of these customary medical procedures into the mainstream while simultaneously tackling concerns related to standardization and quality control.

Africa:

Herbal medicine, spiritual healing, and customary rituals are among the many ancient healing methods that are deeply ingrained in the cultures of many African nations. Across the continent, there are differences in the attempts to incorporate these practices into mainstream healthcare. Some nations have



successfully integrated traditional healers into their healthcare systems, while others have had difficulties with regulation and quality control.

Timeline

Date	Description of Events
1962	The World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognizes the contributions of traditional medicine and establishes a Traditional Medicine Program to promote its integration into healthcare systems globally.
1978	The Alma-Ata Declaration emphasizes the importance of primary healthcare and encourages the inclusion of traditional medicine in healthcare delivery.
2002	The WHO publishes the "WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2002-2005," outlining strategies for the safe and effective use of traditional medicine.
2008	WHO releases the "WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2008-2013," focusing on building the knowledge base, promoting safety and efficacy, and ensuring the quality and accessibility of traditional medicine.
2014	The WHO publishes the "WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023," emphasizing the importance of regulation, research, and collaboration between traditional and conventional healthcare systems.
2019	The WHO officially recognizes Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a part of its International Classification of Diseases (ICD) for the first time.

Possible Solutions

- **Regulatory Control:** Implementation of regulations that could control the illicit production of traditional medicine which are being



circulated in illegal ways. This can involve establishing certification processes, licensing requirements, and monitoring systems to prevent the sale of counterfeit or adulterated products.

- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Raising the awareness to inform the citizens about the illicit traditional medicine and traditional healing practices can benefit in regulating the integration of these illicit medical technique in mainstream healthcare systems. This can involve advocacies, education, and social media advertising.
- **Investment in improvement of the evaluation systems:** Investing in a scientific method to effectively evaluate the safety, efficacy, and mechanisms of action of traditional healing practices can be a way to resolve the issue. This includes conducting clinical trials, pharmacological studies, and ethnobotanical surveys to formulate a valid structure for an examination system for the traditional medicine interventions.

Useful Resources: (from most useful to useful)

Maluleka, Jan Resenga, and Mpho Ngoepe. 2018. "Integrating Traditional Medical Knowledge into Mainstream Healthcare in Limpopo Province." *Information Development* 35 (5): 714–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666918785940>.

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