

04. Exploring The Prevalence and Patterns of Traditional Medicine Use Among the General Population of Conflict-Affected Areas in Sudan 2025, A Cross-Sectional Study.

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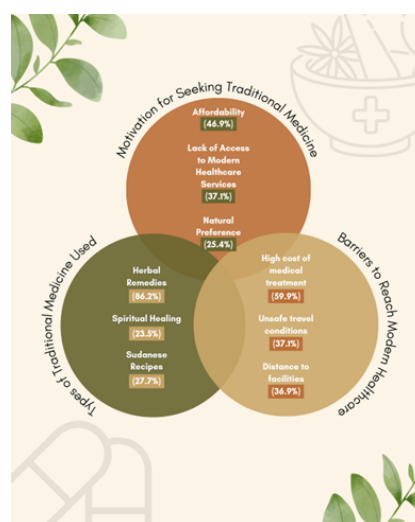
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Background: Traditional medicine, which encompasses indigenous health practices such as herbal therapies and spiritual healing, is deeply embedded in the Sudanese culture and has historically served as a primary healthcare resource due to its accessibility and cultural alignment. Following the conflict that began in Sudan in April 2023, the formal medical infrastructure suffered from collapse, with more than half of hospitals in conflict affected regions ceasing operations, forcing Traditional medicine to transition from a complementary practice to a vital survival strategy. Despite its increased importance during this period of severe healthcare disruption and economic hardship, a significant research gap remains regarding the systematic use and patterns of Traditional medicine within active conflict zones. This study investigates the prevalence and sociodemographic factors influencing traditional medicine use across three conflict affected states to evaluate how communities maintain healing practices during a period of total systemic failure. **Methods:** A community-based, descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted between February and July 2025. The study was set in three conflict-affected states in Sudan: Khartoum, Al Jazirah, and Kordofan. The target population included adults aged 18 years and older who were residing in these states at the time of the study. Data collection was performed through face-to-face interviews using a validated structured questionnaire. Due to insecurity and mobility restrictions within the conflict zones, a convenience sampling technique was utilized. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 21. Categorical variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The relationships between

sociodemographic characteristics and the practice of traditional medicine were evaluated using Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests. **Results:** Among 568 participants, 75.0% reported using traditional medicine since the conflict began. Herbal remedies were the most common practice (86.2%), primarily targeting respiratory and gastrointestinal issues and headaches. Reliance was driven by the high cost (59.9%) and physical insecurity of modern healthcare, with 46.9% citing affordability as a primary motivator and the limited access to adequate medical services. Most users relied on informal information sources and reported perceived symptom relief (73.2%). Usage was significantly associated with sociodemographic factors, including age ($p = 0.000$), education level ($p = 0.002$), and displacement status ($p = 0.003$); 48.8% agreed that traditional medicine had become more reliable due to conflict-related instability. **Conclusion:** This study demonstrates that armed conflicts reshape healthcare-seeking behavior, driving substantial reliance on traditional medicine as an adaptive strategy, driven by healthcare collapse and economic hardship. High usage across all educational levels highlights its broad relevance beyond socioeconomic factors, though frequent non-disclosure to formal providers poses significant safety risks. These findings underscore the urgent need for conflict-sensitive health policies, pharmacovigilance, public education, and clinical research to ensure the safe, evidence-based integration of traditional practices within conflict-affected healthcare systems.

Key Words: Medicine; Traditional, Armed Conflicts, Sudan



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