

**TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF MODERN AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN NIGERIA:
ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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Abstract

Modern medicine is a system of care that is based on scientific knowledge. On the other hand traditional medicine is the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the culture, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different social groups used in maintenance of health as well as the prevention and treatment of physical and mental illness. In Nigeria, there are two different medical care systems that exists inharmoniously with limited co-operation across board hence the need to integrate both together. This review paper examined the issues, problems and prospects of such integration in Nigeria. The negotiated order theory by American Sociologist Anselm Strauss (1993) was used in explaining how integration between the two medical care systems could be achieved in the Nigerian society. The paper examined some issues and problems facing the medical care system such as shortages of health care personnel, and lack of cooperation between modern and traditional medicine practitioners. Also traditional medical practitioners are mostly found in rural areas and lack the professional expertise. There are problems of uncertainty in their drug dosage. Traditional healers are also not very transparent in their dealings with patients, among other problems. This paper recommended that the process of integrating the two health care set-ups must be anchored on policy, education and training as well as monitoring, regulation, quality and assurance.

Key Words: Modern medicine, Traditional medicine, integration, cooperation,

INTRODUCTION

There is a popular contention that 'health' is central to wealth creation, growth and positive development. Global development frameworks like the sustainable development goals can only be achieved if individuals have sound health status. How health is achieved, however cut across various approaches. All over the world, the general framework of health care provisions could be classified into modern and traditional (Abdullahi, 2011). Due to recent developments in the health sector, it seems that the line of demarcation between modern and traditional medicine is becoming somewhat blurred and thin (Abdullahi, 2011), although some distinguishing factors remain. While orthodox (modern) medicine has gained more popular adoption across the world, due to its more matured processes over the years (Akanle and Fakulujuo, 2014), the popularity of traditional medicine is also ascending due to innovative modernizing forces of its processes.

Traditional medicine is now part of the Nigerian health care system but it only exists at the margins and it is only recognized as alternative medicine. This connotes weak appreciation and appropriation even at the policy level. The situation is partly due to poor understanding of traditional medicine in the country as is the case in many product and services.

As traditional medicine become increasingly popular in Nigeria and adopts innovative modern processes in her operations, expectations are that the end product of this modernized traditional medicine should be its full adoption and integration into the health care system.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF KEY TERMS

MODERN MEDICINE Modern medicine or drugs are chemically pure substances which when administered into the body produce pharmacological effects which may consequently lead to alleviation of the disease or help in the diagnosis or prevention of the disorder (K. Chan and L. Cheung, 2000). On other hand, orthodox medicine model termed it as a system of care that is based on the knowledge attained from a scientific process (i.e through observations and research). Modern medical practitioners treat the person (body) in isolated parts and believe it has power and knowledge to fix innate system by interfering in its normal homeostasis using powerful man-made chemicals. Although modern medicine emphasizes on the physical and mental health of a person, the spiritual aspect of the person is not taken into consideration. But recent study by Harald G. Koenig, Dealeman and Nease (1997) among others confirmed that lack of recognition for the spiritual aspect of man can lead to disease and ill-health, hence the need for holistic medicine.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE It is defined by the World Health Organization (2008) as the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences and indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in maintenance of health as “the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of health as well the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness”.

The earliest form of healing substances had been traditional medicines, but with the advent of civilization which had led to better scientific understanding of diseases and medications, modern medicines have become the main and well recognized products for the management of

diseases in modern health systems (K.P. Osemene, A.A. Elujoba and M.O Ilorin, 2011). Many modern medicines have their origin from traditional medicines but the main difference between the two is that the traditional medicines contain a large number of compounds, rather than a single pharmacological active substance; hence components of both traditional and modern medicines may act on one another to moderate, oppose, or enhance an effect (s) (Houghton, 2009).

More so treatment of any kind in traditional medicine involves the use of herbs or ritual, but most of the treatment is both natural and spiritual. This is to emphasize the holistic quality of all traditional medicines that are applied for disease treatment in Nigerian Societies. According to Goldstein (2000) as cited by Asante (2013), it takes the entire physical, mental, spiritual and social make up of the individual in understanding the origin of illness.

INTEGRATION (from the Latin Integer, meaning whole or nature) generally means combining parts so that they work together or form a whole. The concept of integration is considered primarily as a process of amalgamation; that is, two or more elements merged with sufficient interaction so that the unity of the newly formed entity is achieved. The attributes of the concept integration, therefore include process, combination, interaction and unity.

In order words, according to Asante and Awornyo (2013) a useful tool for understanding the process of integrating health care system is by employing the negotiated order theory for studying how health care systems emerged or organizations occur.

This review paper examines the issues, problems and prospects of adoption and integration of modern and traditional medicine in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical platform for this paper is the Negotiated Order theory by Anselm Strauss (1963). Strauss argued that virtually all social order is negotiated order. Through ongoing process of negotiation, social actors alternately create, maintain, transform and are constrained by social structures.

The theory posits that health system or organizations occur as individual practitioners, departments and stakeholders negotiate the terms of interaction with each other. In order for this to be achieved, it is expedient to ensure respect, recognition and collaboration among practitioners. This model represents one of more exciting developments in the study of organizations. Among other things, the negotiated order perspective calls in question the more static structure, functional and rational-bureaucratic explanations of complex organizations. In their place, it presents an interactional model involving a processual and emergent analysis of the manner in which the division of labour and work are accomplished in large organizations. In this framework, the informal aspects of organizations are emphasized as much as the formal and furthermore, there are implied dialectical relationship in which the informal ultimately shapes the formal and vice versa.

BRIEF REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Since prehistoric times, human have used natural products, such as plants animals, microorganism and marine organisms in medicine to alleviate and treat diseases. According to fossil records, the human use of plants as medicines may be traced back at least 60, 000 years (Fabricant D.S 2011). It is highly probable that when seeking food, early humans often consumed poisonous plants, which led to vomiting, diarrhea, coma and other toxic reactions perhaps even death. However in this way early human were able to develop knowledge about edible materials and natural medicine (Gao X.M, Zhang T.M, 2007). By this indication, different societies historically developed various healing methods to combat a variety of health and life threatening diseases. Traditional medicine is also variously known as contemporary and alternative or ethnic medicine and it still play a key role in many countries today (Abdullahi A.A, 2011).

The medications used in traditional medicine are mostly derived from natural products. In traditional medicine, “ clinical trials ” have been conducted since ancient times. In the case of traditional Chinese medicine considerable experience and advances have been accumulated and developed over the past thousands of years with respect to methods of preparation, selection of herbs identification of medicinal materials and the best time for obtaining various different plants. Chinese medicine is now an inseparable part of the Chinese public health system. In recent years it has gradually gained considerable approval as a complementary or alternative medicine in Western Countries. Chinese herbal medicine is

currently used in the healthcare of an estimated 1.5 billion people Worldwide. (Dobos G.J, Tan L., 2005).

While in Nigeria Traditional medicine; the popularity is ascending due to innovative modernizing forces of its processes and new efficiencies in recent years. Nigeria is showing interest in values of traditional medicine, this is mostly as mere component of primary care and as complement of the modern medicine (Omogbadegun and Adeboyega, 2013). Traditional medicine is an integral part of Nigeria's health care systems.

Traditional medicine includes native healers and faith based healers (Erinosho 2006). This categorization somewhat reflects the multi ethnic nature of Nigeria. Largely the type of health pathways to be taken the nature of care and treatment depend on the accepted etiologies of illness as illness are constructed along both natural and supernatural perspectives in Africa. (Bello 2006, Jegede 1996).

Traditional medicine/practitioners are indigenous nature healers that may broadly include herbalists, traditional birth attendants (TBA's) traditional surgeons and the bone setters (Adesina, 2011) who are recognized through various names in Nigeria and Africa depending on the culture and modes of operation per culture. For instance, among the Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria they known as "Adahunse", "Babalawo", "Onisegun", "Dibia" among the people of Igbo, Nye Diblio among the Ekpeye and "Obo" among the Ora people of Edo State, (Erinosho, 2006), "Boka" among the Hausa speaking people of Nigeria and "Sangoma" or "Nyanga" among South African, (Cook, 2009). Traditional medicine often uses vegetables, mineral substances, animal parts and certain other methods such as prayer,

divinations and incantations, (Owumi & Jerome 2008).

Traditional medicine today is a big market traceable to its increasing popularity. According to WHO (2011), traditional medicine is worth an estimated \$73 billion.

OVERVIEW OF MODERN MEDICAL/ HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN NIGERIA

It would seem from available accounts that earliest form of Western-style health care in Nigeria was provided by doctors brought by early explorers, missionaries and European merchants (traders) to cater for their own wellbeing. The services were not available to the indigenes. It was the church missionaries that first established health care services for the people (Schram, 1971). In this regard tribute to the first missionaries. It is stated that first health care facility in the country was a dispensary opened in 1880 by the church missionary society in Obosi followed by others in Onitsha and Ibadan in 1886. However, the first hospital in Nigeria was the Sacred Heart Hospital in Abeokuta, built by the Roman Mission in 1885 (Bull, 1954).

At the time of century, medical services, as is the case with some other services in Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana (the Gold Coast) and Nigeria were merged and controlled by the colonial office in London. This was the first centralization of control of health services in West Africa (Chuke, 1988). The Colonial office determined the services that were available and provided the man power, as health care management became more complex; the central administration of health care services became regionalized while maintaining some common West African Facilities such as the West African Council of Medical Research, which came into being in

February 1954 (Fendall, 1967). Medical services developed specifically in Nigeria with industrialization. Most medical doctors were civil servants, except those working for missionary hospital, who combined evangelical work with healing. Among the civil service doctors, one was appointed the Chief Medical Officer, who became the principal executor of health care policies in Nigeria. They formed the nucleus of the Ministry of Health (Ransome-Kuti, 1987).

Many practitioners of Modern Medicine think such Traditional Medicine as being short of reliability, however they are adopted by the people in the world (Parasuraman S; 2014).

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN NIGERIA

A major challenge in utilization of Traditional medicine in Nigeria lies in the largely unstandardized nature of the practice. There is no proper record of traditional Medicine providers in Nigeria and all of them operates outside the conventional health system, and their modes of practice vary from one locality to another (Ameh, 2011). Due to poor quality products and lack of standards, the potency of herbal products/services varies from one batch/service to the other for the same treatment. The lack of scientific proof of efficiency and safety for most of the remedies, the lack of standardized diagnostic skills, tools or procedures and the seeming unconcerned attitude of Traditional Medical Practitioners to address these issues remains a huge challenge (Kunle, 2009).

PROSPECTS OF INTEGRATING MODERN AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

IN NIGERIA

Traditional medicine specifically in Nigeria is probably on the increase in spite of the great advances in Orthodox medicine. The reasons to this include that of affordable access, ease of access, positive perception, current world disposition, cultural beliefs, belief on better tolerance or low side-effect or adverse reactions (Egharevba, 2012). The benefits of integration for instance it is expected to guarantee greater access to healthcare delivery for people in the low income countries. They usually pleasant patient-specific diagnosis and treatment procedures usually employed by traditional medicine practitioners may improve doctor-patients relations and trust if integrated into the Orthodox Practice (WHO 1978). Financing of herbal medicine may become easier for government since integration may enable better financing through NHIS (HERFON 2006). More so, traditional medicine if integrated with modern medicine is a big market traceable to its increasing popularity. According to WHO (2011) traditional medicine is a significant proportion of the world market worth, an estimated \$83 billion in 2008 and this is because of the high patronage either because it is cheaper, more covenant and sometimes perceived to more effective especially in sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 2007).

APPROACHES THAT COULD BE ADOPTED FOR INTEGRATING MODERN AND TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN NIGERIA

Through Nigerian government developed the policy of integration in 2007, a close look at the policy shows a framework or guide for venturing into integration process is weak. The detailed activities of proposed committees, programmes and some of the councils were not spell out. Hence most of these committees have gone moribund. The traditional medicine desk in Federal Ministry of Health has continued to push for the execution of some of these activities but the obvious lack of support by the Orthodox staff of the ministry most of whom have not been well sensitized and trained on traditional Medicine Management; and integration has slowed down the process. (Egherevba, 2012).

Some processes/steps which needs to be taken for integration to take place are being identified (Adefolaju, 2014)

Identifying or designing specific hospital/sites for clinical trials of Herbal Medicines.

Organizing the traditional Medicine Practitioners into well-defined local Associations or corporative.

Registration and certification of every Traditional Medicine Practitioner with the local Association or cooperative as we have for hospitals and clinics, pharmacy shops, and patient medicine shops.

Covering an expert/stakeholders meeting as a matter of urgency and to develop a detailed document for implementing the integration process. Such document should identify clearly defined goals, objectives, activities, output, outcomes, indicators, milestones, timeliness and responsible body/persons.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION OF

MODERN AND TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

There are some reviews on problems confronting integration of the health care system in Nigeria. These are:

Traditional Knowledge often has a cultural context, a collective ownership, and is constantly evolving: This knowledge includes medicinal materials, rituals and practices, ecological considerations, music dance, poetry, stories, artistic endeavours and spiritual expressions. Currently, traditional indigenous knowledge has little or no national protection, as do other intellectual properties such as literary creations by copy right or inventions which are protected by patents. (Kunle 2009, Egharevba, 2012).

Documentation of Traditional Medicine Practice: A lot of useful information has perished with aged originators due to lack of organized record keeping and documentation. Most traditional medicine practitioners in Nigeria regard the medicine they sue as their personal property and conduct their practices under strict confidence. Hence, documentation of medicinal uses of plant is becoming increasingly urgent because of the rapid loss of natural habitat. This would prevent many of the medicinal plants and other genetic materials becoming extinct before documentation (Gamaniel, 2005, HERFON 2006).

Attitude of Modern Medicine Practitioners: The negative stigma associated with traditional medicine among Orthodox practitioners over shadow all the aspects including the otherwise beneficial pharmacological aspects such as herbal medicine. This is not entirely

their fault as they are only responding to their professional training. The introduction of courses in traditional medicine into the curriculum of undergraduate, post graduate and professional continuing education may correct this anomaly (Egharevba, 2012).

Sustainability of Traditional Medicine: The bio diversity conservation medicinal plant which is considered the major raw material for traditional medicine is at risk since many of its practitioners do not consider such as important. Some of the plants are already endangered in some localities. Hence the practice(s) requiring such plants have become unsustainable (Gamaniel, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Health care delivery system in Nigeria is generally very poor. Various reasons have been adduced for the state of affairs and they include inadequate supply of health professionals, poor distribution of health facilities with concentration of the available few in the urban centers, poor access to safe drinking water, poor harnessing of all available medical and health system and poor infrastructural development, among others. A large proportion of Nigerians especially in the rural areas can still not access affordable health care. Many Nigerians rely on traditional medicine which is available, accessible and affordable to them. Since more than 80 percent of the populations rely upon traditional medicine for care and cure, it deserves to be fully developed and integrated with the modern healthcare system. Government should therefore create the enabling environment for the development of traditional medicine and its eventual full integration into the health care delivery system of the country for the benefit of the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussion, it is clear that an effective integration of modern and traditional medicine in Nigeria requires deep reflection and act on the ground. To this end, the following recommendations are provided for enhancing the vital process;

To effectively deal with the issues relating to the lack of trained Traditional Medicine Practitioners, it is recommended that the legislations relating to Traditional Medicine should be properly implemented and included in school curricular at all levels. This is vital for continuous training of Traditional Medicine Practitioners and Modern Medicine Practitioners on the integration of the two health care system.

The process of integrating the two health care systems must be anchored on issues relating to policy, education and training, safety, efficiency and quality.

Details on dosage should be included as part of the information on the package of traditional medicines. This will help add extra value to branding of traditional medicines.

The monitoring of modern and Traditional medicine practitioners should effectively undertaken by the National Pharmaceutical council and National Agency for Food and Drugs Authority Commission. This will help to ensure that existing code of conduct relating to the practice of traditional medicine are enforced.

Certified herbal drugs should be included in the list of medicines covered by the National State Health Insurance Scheme.

There must be regular discussion and dialogue amongst the practitioners of the two medical systems.

More research should be undertaken to investigate all aspects of traditional medicine to improve methods, techniques and the composition of traditional medicine. Through this means, ill-perceptions about the medical system as unhygienic in particular will be eradicated.

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