

## ABSTRACT

The study aimed at documenting the use of traditional medicine in management of sexually transmitted infections by Samburu traditional healers. The study also documents the methods of diagnosis of Sexually Transmitted Infections/Diseases (STIs/STDs) by the traditional healers. Data on use of plants for management of STIs was obtained using focused group discussions and administration of semi-structured questionnaire to 29 traditional healers from seven divisions in Samburu County. The information on identity of medicinal plants, medicinal preparations, their effectiveness, safety, availability and STIs diagnosis was obtained. The symptoms of STIs as mentioned by the traditional healers were varied and diverse and Samburu community has accumulated reliable ethno-diagnostic skills for diagnosis of STIs on the basis of these symptoms. The commonly used plants species in management of STIs as cited were *Clerodendrum myricoides*, (93%) with the roots being the most preferred part, *Carissa edulis* (52%), *Myrsine africana*,(31%), *Rhamnus staddo*,(24%) *Rhamnus prinoides* 17%), *Sansevieria enhribergii*, (10%) and *Psiadia arabica* (10%). *Clerodendrum myricoides* was ranked first in STIs management and is used alone or in combination with the other plants. The purpose of using it in combination with other plants was to increase its efficacy and to decrease toxicity. The medicinal remedies for STIs were prepared mainly as decoctions and given orally, but in chronic cases of STIs, *Clerodendrum myricoides* is given per rectum. Although *Clerodendrum myricoides* was ranked as the best plant, toxicity was reported to be acute, severe and often fatal in case of its overdose. The survey showed that *Clerodendrum myricoides* alone or in combination with other plants is considered an important medicinal remedy for STIs in the Samburu community. However, there is a danger for its eradication since the roots are commonly used. There is need to develop propagation measures in order to ensure sustainability.

*Medicinal plants used in the management of sexually transmitted infections by the Samburu community, Kenya*