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ABSTRACT

Title: UTILIZATION OF HERBAL ANTIMALARIAL REMEDIES AS ALTERNATIVE AMONG ASSENDABO INHABITANTS (SOUTHWEST ETHIOPIA).

Text: Malaria affects 300-500 million people each year, resulting in over 1 million deaths. Particularly, falciparum malaria mimics other diseases with its varied presentations that should be considered during the differential diagnosis of acute illnesses, like hepatorenal syndrome, hepatic failure, and acute hepatitis. Malaria involvement of different organs and tissues/cells is well known with its specific histopathological changes. Thus, effective antimalarial therapy should be in place not only to reduce mortality and morbidity of malaria, but also to reduce the risk of parasite resistance to the drugs. The currently used drugs often present adverse side effects as their metabolism involves the liver. Yet not many new drugs have been developed to tackle malaria, and alternative modes of malaria treatment should be assessed and included in the national malaria treatment guidelines.

To assess the current utilization of traditional herbal medicines in the management of malaria among inhabitants of Assendabo town (Jimma, Ethiopia), a cross-sectional study was done on randomly selected inhabitants of Assendabo town and its surrounding villages using structured questionnaires.

Among the 300 respondents interviewed, 86(28.7 %) reported perceived illness within two weeks of recall of which 41(47.7%) used traditional medicine and home made remedies. This study has documented 13 different types of plants traditionally used to treat malaria. *Ajuga remota* (Armagusa) and *Moringa olifera* (birbira) were among the plants and different literatures support the findings that the documented medicinal plants have active principles against Plasmodium species.

Traditional herbal remedies could be treatment alternatives if supported by scientific evidences and standardized as to the way they are utilized in the community. However, they might bring about serious toxicities leading to organ damages unless controlled and integrated into clinical medicine. Although this study has documented considerable proportion of herbal remedies, the authors would like to recommend further studies like *in vitro* and *in vivo* activity tests, clinical trails and organ toxicities (e.g. liver) of the herbal drugs.