



An inventory of medicinal plants used to treat malaria by the Nandi people of Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and objective: In Kenya, many people use traditional medicine to treat many diseases including malaria. Malaria is one of the major disease burdens worldwide affecting more than 90 countries inhabited by 2.4 billion people (40% of the world's population). In Kenya, it is an endemic disease affecting more than 4 million people with the highest incidences being recorded in the Rift valley, Western, Central and Eastern provinces. The disease threatens the life of around 25 million out of the country's total population of 39 million people. It is of national concern in view of development of resistance to conventional drugs by new resistant strains of *Plasmodium falciparum*. There is therefore need for alternative and affordable therapy. Many antimalarial drugs have been derived from medicinal plants traditionally used to treat malaria by the Nandi community.

Methodology and results: An ethno medicinal study was conducted on the use of medicinal plants for treatment or



prevention of human ailments by Nandi people. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data mainly through individual interviews conducted with selected knowledgeable professional healers. Plants were collected, pressed, dried, preserved, mounted and identified through available literature and voucher specimens at the University of Nairobi and Kenya National Museum Laboratories. Forty four (44) species in 40 genera and 27 families were identified during the study. Labiatae, Euphorbiacea and Compositae families represented the species most commonly cited.

Key words: Indigenous knowledge, medicinal plants, malaria, ethnobotany, Nandi people.