

Factors Contributing to the Utilization of Traditional Medicine in the Treatment of Ear, Nose, and Throat Conditions

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ABSTRACT

The rate of the use of traditional medicine continues to grow worldwide and is the preferred treatment in especially rural communities in developing countries. This study assessed the factors contributing to the utilization of traditional medicine in the treatment of Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) conditions in Kumasi. This quantitative study used a descriptive survey study design to answer the research questions. Convenience sampling technique was used in sampling 166 respondents for the study using Yamen's formula. A questionnaire was developed to gather information under each objective. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science Software to present descriptive analysis. Results from the study showed majority of the respondents believed that cultural beliefs influenced the usage of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions as more than half of the respondents; 141 (84.9%) responded yes to the statement, 'Traditional medicine is associated with religious and spiritual underpinnings'. Also, cost, spirituality, social relationships, and health workers' interpersonal relationships among others affected the usage of traditional medicine among the respondents. It was therefore concluded that cultural beliefs are a very significant factor that contributes to the usage of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the various health directorates in Kumasi should plan and organize a public awareness campaign program to educate the general population about the potential benefits and risks of traditional medicine.

Keywords

Ear, Nose, and Throat
Knowledge
Kumasi
Traditional Medicine
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Introduction

It is now fairly common for people of different cultures and ethnic groups all over the world to practice traditional medicine. It is widely available and reasonably priced, and the rapid notoriety it is currently receiving is a direct result of marketing efforts in the media and on the Internet. The World Health Organisation (WHO) [1] defines traditional medicine as "the total of knowledge, skills, and practice based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as the prevention, diagnosis, improvement, or treatment of physical and mental illness." Traditional medicine is also used in the treatment of mental and physical illnesses. Traditional herbal medicine has a very extensive historical basis that dates back to the Stone Age [2]. Furthermore, the usage of traditional herbal medicine has been around for a very long time. According to Natako [3], practitioners of traditional healing and magic on the African continent have been there for a far longer period of time than some of the other traditional medical sciences. Furthermore, in comparison to Western medicine, these practices appear to be significantly more prevalent. Divination, spiritualism, and herbalism are the three levels of specialty that make up African traditional medicine, which is a sort of holistic healthcare system that is organized into three levels of specialty [4]. However, there are scenarios in which these three levels of specialty may overlap. A traditional healer is someone who gives medical care to the community by employing various ways such as incantations, herbs, minerals, animal parts, and other techniques that are based on the customs and beliefs of his people [2]. According to Builders [5], traditional medicine is often characterized as a blend of knowledge and practice that is utilized in the process of diagnosing, preventing, and curing disease. There has been some research conducted on traditional medicine in an attempt to determine whether or not it is effective and efficient [6]. However, the majority of the traditional medicines that are now being utilized in Ghana have not been subjected to any form of research or regulation [7]. Most people prefer to use traditional medicine that has uncertain authentication as compared to evidence-based modern health facilities. Several factors have been reported in many studies as responsible for the increasing utilization of traditional medicines in developing countries making it important to conduct a lot of studies into it [8].

According to Njoroge and Bussmann [9], disorders that affect the ear, nose, and throat (ENT) can frequently have severe repercussions that make it difficult for patients to experience their senses, as well as psychological and emotional repercussions that have a negative impact on their quality of life. According to Kørvel-Hanquist et al. [10], when children experience injury to any of their senses, including the ear, nose, and throat, it might potentially hinder their language development and hinder their success in school. On an annual basis, more than 50,000 children are affected by otitis media, which is recognized as a primary source of infections in children. In underdeveloped nations, the number of otolaryngologists who have received training is quite low, and in Africa, there is a shortage of both skilled professionals and facilities that can assist with the care of these disorders [10].

Moreover, in some locations in Africa, ENT diseases are often reported in outpatient facilities making some of these conditions difficult to treat due to the fact that the microorganisms have evolved resistance against the antibiotics [11]. According to Suliman [12], a wide range of microorganisms, such as Rhinoviruses, Streptococcus spp., and Staphylococcus spp., are responsible for the development of diseases that affect the ear, nose, and throat. In spite of the fact that antibiotics have been essential in the management of the majority of ENT infections, it is now widely acknowledged that their overuse and improper application have led to a growth in antibiotic resistance [11]. Niculescu and Grumezescu [13] report that some authors have discovered that in light of the fact that microorganisms that are involved with ENT infections have become resistant to treatment, alternative sources of medications that may be obtained from plants could be useful. To mend their condition, the majority of people are turning to the usage of traditional herbal medicines. In addition, numerous pharmaceuticals have been derived from plants that have centuries-old medical applications. Quinine, for example, was found to be derived from the Cinchona plant, and Digitoxin, which is commonly used for the treatment of cardiac disorders, was also shown to be derived from Digitalis purpurea [13]. The fact that this is the case illustrates that traditional medicine has the potential to be useful in the treatment of some illnesses of the ear, nose, and throat if it is studied and evaluated thoroughly. According to the findings of a research study that was carried out in Central Kenya, around sixty-seven different plant species were discovered to be beneficial in the treatment of ENT problems [9]. However, since these treatments have the potential to yield some beneficial outcomes, it is necessary to examine them.

According to estimates provided by WHO, over eighty percent of the world's population relies on herbal medicine for at least a portion of their primary health care [1]. Within the continent of Africa, ninety percent of the overall population relies on traditional medicine as their primary primary healthcare provider. According to Hill et al. [14], the prevalence of the

use of traditional medicine in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to range between 40 and 71%, with an average estimate of 58.2%. However, the prevalence varies from study to study. According to Asare [2], it is believed that between sixty-five and seventy percent of the people who live in rural parts of Ghana rely on herbal medicine as their primary method of treatment for illnesses.

When it comes to treating any sickness, herbal medicine is typically the first method that is utilized in Ghana, particularly in rural neighborhoods. According to Ozioma and Chinwe [15], the widespread usage of traditional healers can be attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of access to medical institutions, inadequate roads and infrastructure, and the absence of affordable treatment options. In addition, the ratio of traditional healers to patients is approximately one to two hundred, whereas the ratio of medical doctors to patients is approximately one to twenty thousand [16]. This is a significant factor in the medical decision-making process. According to Ozioma and Chinwe [15], the choice of a certain style of health care is also influenced by other factors, such as the individual's financial condition, level of education, and the recommendations of friends and family. It is estimated that seventy percent of the population uses traditional medicine to meet their primary healthcare requirements [2]. Traditional medicine continues to be an essential component of the sociocultural and traditional system. According to Peprah et al. [17], the majority of authors are of the opinion that the cultural values and traditions of individuals invariably impact the decisions and behaviors that they exhibit when seeking health treatment. In Uganda, about 60 to 80% of the citizens visit traditional healers as their first line of health care [6]. Similarly, in Ghana, there is a significant part of the population that still considers traditional medicine relevant. Some factors have been reported to influence the use of traditional medicine [8]. For instance, wide and easy accessibility of traditional health providers compared to modern health care facilities, high cost of treatment from modern health care facilities, poor educational background, low socio-economic status, and attitude of health workers towards patients [15]. Other studies reveal that some traditional medicine may be used solely or in conjunction with modern medicine. In the management of their conditions, people may resort to medical practitioners after receiving treatment from traditional medicine that didn't yield any positive results [7]. Most health workers despise the use of traditional medicines because of the experiences of patients who aggravated their conditions due to herbal traditional treatment leading to irreparable or otherwise serious complications. Many studies have been conducted to determine how cultural beliefs affect traditional medicine generally, however, few studies have been done on the factors that influence the use of traditional medicine in the management of ENT conditions.

The estimated average utilization of traditional medicine in Sub-Saharan Africa is 58.2% within the general population, though this figure may differ based on geographical locations and among various ethnic communities [14]. Data on the prevalence of traditional medicine utilization among specific demographic groups and cohorts is limited [18]. The widespread use of traditional medicine for treating ENT conditions has significant clinical implications, particularly when used alongside Western treatments [19]. ENT infections result from bacterial, fungal, viral, and environmental factors affecting the ear, nose, and throat. These infections impact the sensory functioning of both adults and children, frequently resulting in considerable impairment in their daily activities [20]. Antibiotics have played a significant role in managing ENT infections; however, their overuse and misuse markedly contribute to the rise of antimicrobial resistance [21].

Anecdotal evidence suggests that traditional preparations are more effective than modern medicines. Traditional medicine holds significant historical and cultural value across various populations and can offer health benefits when utilized safely and appropriately [7]. Nonetheless, numerous side effects are associated with herbal medicine [22]. In South Africa, 68% of poisoning-related deaths among native blacks resulted from the toxicity of traditional medicine [23]. In Ghana, traditional medicine serves as a prevalent and informal healthcare resource utilized extensively across the nation [24]. Given the rising resistance of microorganisms linked to ENT infections and the growing issue of environmental pollution, there is a pressing need for alternative sources of new pharmaceuticals [9]. These may be sourced from plants utilized in traditional remedies for the management of ENT conditions.

Although attempts to better understand and regulate traditional medicine are ongoing, most research studies have focused on the effectiveness and components of traditional medicine [2]. Information on factors influencing the use of traditional medicine is also limited among patients with ENT conditions in Ghana [25]. Additionally, it has been observed that most patients who report to ENT facilities use traditional medicine as some form of first aid. Therefore, the need to assess the utilization of traditional medicine in treating various conditions of the ear nose, and throat. This study is designed to assess factors influencing the utilization of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions among ENT patients in Kumasi.

Material and Methods

The study used a descriptive survey design of the quantitative approach. The study focused on the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Department in the various hospitals in Kumasi. The population consisted of 285 individuals aged 18 and above dealing with ENT conditions within two weeks of the data collection period. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 166 was

determined with a 5% margin of error. Convenience sampling was applied to reach accessible participants, despite its potential bias. Inclusion criteria included individuals experiencing ENT conditions and willing to consent. Those not present or unwilling to consent were excluded. A questionnaire adapted from prior studies [26] was divided into sections on demographics, cultural beliefs, socio-economic factors, and healthcare attitudes toward traditional medicine for ENT treatment. Pretesting was conducted in a Polyclinic for validity (Cronbach's Alpha $\geq$ 0.8) and reliability. An introductory letter was obtained from KATH, and respondents meeting the inclusion criteria were informed and consented. Also, both written and oral consent were obtained, ensuring respondents' rights to withdraw, privacy, and confidentiality. Sensitive questions could be skipped, and consent was facilitated for non-English speakers. For respondents who had challenges reading and writing, the researchers translated the consent form into Twi for them in the presence of a witness after which both the witness and the respondent were made to sign or thumbprint the consent form. The data was analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 26.

Results

Table 1 represents the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents of the study. Most of the respondents 41 (24.7%) were 36-40 years old, 40 (24.1%) were between 41-45 years, 38 (22.9%) were between 31-35 years, 22 (13.3%) were above 46 years old. 17 (10.2%) were between 26-30 years and only 8 (4.8%) were between 18-25 years old.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=166)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	18-25	8	4.8
	26-30	17	10.2
	31-35	38	22.9
	36-40	41	24.7
	41-45	40	24.1
	Above 46	22	13.3
Religion	Islamic	35	21.1
	Christianity	117	70.5
	African Traditional Religion	14	8.4
Educational Level	No formal education	54	32.5
	Primary education	60	36.1
	Secondary education	27	16.3
	Tertiary education	25	15.1
Gender	Male	49	29.5
	Female	117	70.5
Marital Status	Single	43	25.9
	Divorced	18	10.8
	Married	105	63.3
Previous or Current Disease Condition	Ear	95	57.2
	Throat	30	18.1
	Nose	41	24.7

Concerning religion, the majority 117 (70.5%) were Christians, 35 (21.1%) were Muslims and 14 (8.4%) belonged to the African Traditional Religion. Concerning the educational level of the respondents, most 60 (36.1%) had primary education, 54 (32.5%) had no formal education, 27 (16.3%) had secondary education and 25 (15.1%) had tertiary education. More than half of the respondents 117 (70.5%) were females and 49 (29.5%) of them were males. With regards to marital status, more than half 105 (63.3%) were married, 43 (25.9%) were single, and 18 (10.8%) were divorced. A little above half of the respondents 95 (57.2%) had a previous or current disease condition with their ear, 41 (24.7%) had a disease condition with their nose and 30 (18.1%) had a previous or current disease condition with their throat.

Table 2. Influence of Cultural Beliefs on Usage of Traditional Medicine in Treatment of ENT Conditions (n=166)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
I believe in the use of traditional medicine for treating ear, nose, or throat conditions	Yes	111	66.9
	No	55	33.1
Traditional medicine is very effective in the treatment of ear, nose, and throat conditions	Yes	123	74.1
	No	43	25.9
I use or have used traditional medicine when I suffered from the condition	Yes	145	87.3
	No	21	12.7
I use traditional medicine to complement modern healthcare treatments	Yes	108	65.1
	No	58	34.9
Traditional medicine is associated with religious and spiritual underpinnings	Yes	141	84.9
	No	25	15.1
Traditional medicine treats the condition holistically	Yes	88	53.0
	No	78	47.0
Traditional medicine has no toxic effects on the body	Yes	131	78.9
	No	35	21.1
I am satisfied with the use of modern medicine as well	Yes	149	89.8
	No	17	10.2

Table 2 represents the responses of the participants on the influence of cultural beliefs on the usage of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions. More than half of the respondents 111 (66.9%) answered yes to the statement, "I believe in the use of traditional medicine for treating ear, nose or throat conditions" and 55 (33.1%) responded no. The majority 123 (74.1%) said traditional medicine is very effective in the treatment of ear, nose, and throat conditions and 43 (25.9%) said no. To the statement, "I use or have used traditional medicine when I suffered the condition" most 145 (87.3%) said yes and 21 (12.7%) said no. A significant number of the respondents 108 (65.1%) said they use traditional medicine to complement modern healthcare treatments and 58 (34.9%) said no. More than half 141 (84.9%) responded yes to the statement, "Traditional medicine is associated with religious and spiritual underpinnings" and only 25 (15.1%) said no. A little above half 88 (53.0%) said

traditional medicine treats the condition holistically and 78 (47.0%) said no. The majority of the respondents 131 (78.9%) said yes to the statement, "Traditional medicine has no toxic effects on the body" and 35 (21.1%) said no. A significant number of the respondents 149 (89.8%) said they were satisfied with the use of modern medicine as well and only 17 (10.2%) said no.

Table 3. Socio-Economic Factors Contributing to Utilization of Traditional Medicine in the Treatment of ENT Conditions (n=166)

Statement	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
Traditional medicine is easily accessible and available.	61(36.8)	71(42.8)	18(10.8)	12(7.2)	4(2.4)
There are remote modern health facilities in my community to address my health needs	54(32.5)	73(44)	24(14.5)	7(4.2)	8(4.8)
I prefer traditional medicine to modern health care because it is cheap and affordable	21(12.7)	82(49.4)	31(18.7)	19(11.4)	13(7.8)
Financial constraint is a major hindrance for me to visit modern healthcare	37(22.3)	60(36.1)	26(15.7)	39(23.5)	4(2.4)
The National Health Insurance Scheme covers most of the treatment and drugs for ENT.	24(14.5)	15(9)	29(17.5)	74(44.6)	24(14.4)
I am satisfied with the social relationships traditional healers provide	19(11.4)	72(43.4)	75(45.2)	0(0)	0(0)

Table 3 illustrates the socio-economic factors contributing to the utilization of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions. More than half of the respondents 132 (79.5%) agreed that traditional medicine is easily accessible and available, 18 (10.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 16 (9.6%) disagreed. To the statement, "There are remote modern health facilities in my community to address my health needs," the majority of the respondents 127 (76.5%) agreed to it, 24 (14.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 15 (9.0%) disagreed. A significant number 103 (62.1%) preferred traditional medicine to modern health care because it is cheap and affordable, 31 (18.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 32 (19.2%) disagreed. More than half 97 (58.4%) agreed that financial constraints were a major hindrance for them to visit modern health care 43 (25.9%) disagreed and 26 (15.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed. To the statement, "National Health Insurance Scheme covers most of treatment and drugs for ENT", the majority 98 (59.0%) disagreed. 29 (17.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 39 (23.5%) agreed. Most of the respondents 91 (54.8%) agreed that they were satisfied with the

social relationship traditional healers provide, 75 (45.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed and none of the respondents disagreed.

Table 4. Attitude of Health Workers as A Factor Contributing to Utilization of Traditional Medicine in the Treatment of ENT Conditions (n=166)

Statement	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
Health workers speak against the use of traditional medicine	25(15.1)	50(30.1)	49(29.5)	33(19.9)	9(5.4)
Health workers show little concern for my condition	29(17.5)	43(25.9)	17(10.2)	60(36.1)	17(10.2)
Health workers do not involve me in the treatment of my disease	24(14.5)	44(26.5)	32(19.3)	40(24.1)	26(15.7)
I am likely to encounter a negative experience with health workers	18(10.8)	33(19.9)	47(28.3)	44(26.5)	24(14.5)
Health workers have adequate knowledge of traditional medicine	8(4.8)	43(25.9)	39(23.5)	60(36.1)	16(9.6)

Table 4 shows the attitude of health workers as a factor contributing to the utilization of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions. Close to half of the respondents 75 (45.2%) agreed that health workers speak against the use of traditional medicine, 49 (29.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 42 (25.3%) disagreed. The majority 77 (46.3%) disagreed with 'health workers show little concern for my condition', 72 (43.4%) agreed and 17 (10.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed. A significant number of the respondents 68 (41.0%) agreed that health workers do not involve them in the treatment of their disease, 32 (19.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 66 (39.8%) disagreed. Close to half of the participants 68 (41.0%) disagreed that they are likely to encounter a negative experience with health workers, 51 (30.7%) agreed and 47 (28.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Most of the respondents 76 (45.7%) disagreed that health workers have adequate knowledge of traditional medicine, 51 (30.7%) agreed and 39 (23.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Discussion

A. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Most of the respondents 41 (24.7%) were 36-40 years old and 40 (24.1%) were between 41-45 years. With regards to marital status, more than half 105 (63.3%) were married. This finding is very similar to another research study conducted in Ghana, which found that traditional medicine was more prevalent among older people and married people [27].

B. Influence of Cultural Beliefs on Usage of Traditional Medicine in Treatment of ENT Conditions

A significant number of the respondents 108 (65.1%) said they use traditional medicine to complement modern healthcare treatments. A similar study conducted in Nigeria confirms these results. It was stated in that study that some people solely resort to traditional methods of health care while others use the traditional methods to complement modern health care treatments [15].

More than half 141 (84.9%) responded yes to the statement, "Traditional medicine is associated with religious and spiritual underpinnings". This is at parity with a study that reported that most respondents were of the view that the traditional medicinal treatment is based on spiritualism, herbs, and divination to diagnose, treat, and/or prevent diseases [8]. A similar study found that it is believed by some patriots of traditional healers that some illnesses are spiritual and require someone with spiritual insight to be able to understand and find a cure for the illness [8]. Additionally, another study reported that religion and spiritual beliefs are believed to have an influence on the choice of healthcare treatment in case of illness [6]. People are more likely to choose health practices that resonate with their beliefs about health. Cultural beliefs about diseases tend to influence the upsurge use of traditional medicine [2].

A little above half 88 (53.0%) said traditional medicine treats the condition holistically. Similar to the findings of this study is the research that reported that traditional medicine uses a holistic healing approach which accounts for one of the major reasons why people choose traditional medicine [28]. The ability of these medicines to cure many diseases at the same time was acknowledged in another study [29]. Another study stated that positive attitudes to traditional treatment are associated with the belief in holism where the whole being including the body, mind, and spirit is considered critical to health and treated wholly [30].

The majority of the respondents 131 (78.9%) said yes to the statement, "Traditional medicine has no toxic effects on the body". This finding is consistent with a study that found that some people believed traditional methods of treatment are more natural and involve little or no chemicals thus these produce minimal toxic effects on the body [29]. Additionally, another study reported that a major concern was that herbal mixtures have little or no side effects because they are prepared from natural sources, unlike conventional drugs that are prepared from chemicals and may be accompanied by side effects [9].

A significant number of the respondents 149 (89.8%) said they were satisfied with the use of modern medicine as well. Contrastingly, a study conducted to determine the views of students' beliefs about conventional medications found that students from Ghana and Asian origin were less satisfied with Western medicines [30].

C. Socio-Economic Factors Contributing to the Utilization of Traditional Medicine in the Treatment of ENT conditions

More than half of the respondents 132 (79.5%) agreed that traditional medicine is easily accessible and available. This is similar to a study that found that access and availability of traditional medicine have become easy as a result of the wide distribution of traditional healers. The authors added that remote communities away from modern health facilities are a crucial factor that hinders members of particular communities from seeking modern health care [14].

To the statement, "There are remote modern health facilities in my community to address my health needs," the majority of the respondents 127 (76.5%) agreed. This is not congruent with a statement that reported that particularly in rural areas, there is a higher patronage for traditional medicine since most modern health facilities are situated in urban communities [6]. This may be so because of the setting of the study which is not a rural area.

A significant number 103 (62.1%) preferred traditional medicine to modern health care because it is cheap and affordable. This is at parity with the research study conducted by (Gyasi, et al., 2016) where many respondents believed that traditional medicine is cost-effective, unlike modern healthcare treatment where the individual bears the cost of consultation, treatment, medications, and various investigations. According to that same study, some respondents openly said that they sometimes resort to traditional medicine when they do not have enough funds to go to the hospital [31].

To the statement, "National Health Insurance Scheme covers most of treatment and drugs for ENT", the majority 98 (59.0%) disagreed. A similar study reported that the National Health Insurance Scheme is responsible for covering some basic costs of hospital bills, however, many treatments and drugs are not covered under the scheme as a result individuals are left with no choice but to seek a more cost-friendly option [32].

Most of the respondents 91 (54.8%) agreed that they were satisfied with the social relationship traditional healers provide. This is consistent with a study that stated that the social relationship between the healthcare provider and client is very important. In that study, some users of traditional treatment reported that traditional herbalists offer good human relations with their clients [33]. In another similar study, traditional healers displayed good attitudes toward clients and also provided their clients with a more participatory role in the treatment decisions according to the participants of the study. This act creates a good relationship with traditional healers promoting satisfaction of care [14].

D. Attitude of Health Workers as a Contributing Factor to Utilization of Traditional Medicine in the Treatment of ENT Conditions

Close to half of the respondents 75 (45.2%) agreed that health workers speak against the use of traditional medicine. A study that confirms this finding stated that several nurses (57%) stated that they would urge their patients to cease taking herbal medications and would also educate them about the negative consequences of herbal medications [21]. In contrast, several quantitative studies have revealed that nurses have positive attitudes toward the use of traditional medicine in the hospital and would encourage it as an alternate treatment [21].

The majority 77 (46.3%) disagreed that health workers show little concern for their conditions. This is consistent with a study that reported that previous unpleasant experiences and dissatisfaction with the use of orthodox medicine were expressed as among the reasons for using traditional medicine [34]. These experiences ranged from the ineffectiveness of conventional treatment, concern for the safety of therapies, and the attitude of health professionals [6].

A significant number of the respondents 68 (41.0%) agreed that health workers do not involve them in the treatment of their disease. This is contrary to what was noted in a study that nurses in Australia are prepared for in-hospital complementary alternative medicine use and are eager to help patients choose the best alternative therapies available [35].

Most of the respondents 76 (45.7%) disagreed that health workers have adequate knowledge of traditional medicine. This conforms to other literature on the subject. For example, one study reported that the majority of the nurses demonstrated little knowledge of traditional medicine and its various types [21]. Another study found that some were not willing to learn anything about traditional medicine because they considered it as not evidence-based [36]. Again, it was reported that although the nurses in the study had a positive attitude, they had very little expertise in herbal medicine [34],[37].

Conclusion

It could be concluded therefore from the results of the study that cultural beliefs are a very significant factor that contributes to the usage of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions. Regarding the socio-economic factors contributing to the utilization of traditional medicine in the treatment of ENT conditions, cost, financial constraints, social relationships, person-centeredness, and spirituality contributed to the use of traditional medicine by ENT patients. Health workers' lack of knowledge of traditional medications, poor interpersonal and communication attitudes, and dislike for traditional medicine from the perspectives of the respondents were determining factors that motivated them to seek traditional medicine. The Head of the Department of Public Health Unit of the Hospitals in

Kumasi should plan and organize a public awareness campaign program to educate the general population about the potential benefits and risks of traditional medicine. Also, the Director of Nursing Service of the Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat (EENT) unit in collaboration with the Head of the In-Service Training Department of Hospitals in Kumasi should organize regular training and education programs for health workers, especially nurses working at the ENT unit on cultural beliefs and practices related to traditional medicine.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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