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Full Length Research Article

# Ethnobiological survey of traditional medicine practice for Skin related infections in Oyo State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

A comprehensive survey of traditional medicinal practices was carried out between November 2008 and January 2012 in 16 different locations across the Oyo State, Nigeria with the aim of documenting the traditional medicinal practices of the people. This article focuses on the traditional medicinal practices used for the treatment of skin related infections. Semi-structured questionnaires and open-ended informal interviews were administered during series of repeated visits to a total of 31 respondents. A total of 54 traditional medicinal practices used for the treatment of skin infections were described in this study. Notable skin infections studied include skin rashes, eczema, ringworm, acne, baby skin rashes, insect repellent/bite, leprosy, toilet disease, whitlow, aftershave, wound antiseptic/dressing/sore/inflamed sores, procrastinated injury, measles, boils, abscess, chicken pox and small pox. In addition, 47 plants spread across 30 plant families were encountered in this study, 2 animals - *Archatina archatina* (giant land snail) and *Coturnix ypsilophora* (brown quail) – and 7 non-living ingredients were also reported to be used in the herbal preparations. However, *Aloe vera*, *Citrus aurantifolia*, *Ageratum conyzoides*, *Ocimum gratissimum* and *Vernonia amygdalina* were among the most frequently used plants for the treatment of skin infections in this study. Furthermore, the use of *A. vera* and *Vitellaria paradoxa* for the treatment of skin infections has gained global attention to the extent that industrial products from these plants are produced, distributed, sold and used globally. Mode of preparation of the herbal products and their administration to patients vary considerably. The role of indigenous knowledge in the medicinal practices for the treatment of skin infections was observed in this study and the preservation of this indigenous knowledge is hereby advocated.

**Keywords:** Skin related infections, Ethnobiological survey, traditional medicinal practices, Oyo state, Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

Traditional medical system plays a key role in health care around the world (Lee, 1999). Plants and animals have been used as medicinal sources since ancient times, and even today, animal and plant based pharmacopoeias continue to play an essential role in world health care (Alves *et al.*, 2008). The use of biological resources for various therapies has

been documented in many different parts of the world, especially in remote regions where traditional medicines provide an alternative to "modern" health care system (Alves *et al.*, 2008). The World Health Organization estimated that 80% of the world population relies on traditional medicine prepared mainly by the use of natural products (animals and plants) to meet their daily health requirements (Kang and Phipps, 2003).

Africa is known for a long and valued tradition of using wild animals and plants for medicinal purposes (Anon, 1999). Traditional healing existed in Africa long before the advent of modern medicine and the people depended largely on traditional medicine as their only source of health care (Adeola, 1992). Traditional medicine, as practiced today, even made new drug discoveries, which have been found useful in curing major ailments that were previously incurable with orthodox medicine as well as other hereditary ailments such as diabetes mellitus and hypertension (Odu, 1987). While stressing the importance of zootherapy to human kind the world over, Costa-Neto (1999) submitted that the time has come to record indigenous knowledge related to therapeutic animal uses and to devise strategies to exploit these natural resources more sustainably.

According to Marshall (1998), traditional medicine is not only viewed as the best method for some treatments, the number of traditional medical practitioners (TMPs) practicing in most African regions is far greater than the number of orthodox medical practitioners, indicating that the availability of traditional medicine outweighs orthodox medicine. The 'engine' for traditional medicinal practices is the wild resources (flora and fauna) used extensively in preparation of 'herbal drugs' employed in the treatment of diseases and situations (Soewu, 2006). Although plants and plant-derived materials make up the majority of ingredients used in most traditional medical systems, whole animals, animal parts and animal derived products also constitute important elements of the folk pharmacopoeia throughout the world (Alves *et al.*, 2008).

The ethnobiological information of medicinal plants and animals are fast disappearing, and this is more pronounced in developing countries (Abebe, 1996). In view of the rapid loss of such knowledge, its documentation as well as a better understanding of its botanico-historical roots has become an essential task of ethno-allied disciplines (Leonti *et al.*, 2003). Less than 1% of indigenous cultures have been surveyed for their knowledge of medicinal plants and other natural products in the world (Prance, 2000). Researches show that the indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants is decreasing at alarming rate.

This is due to people's access to modern medicine and exposure to modern culture and adoption of modern culture (Kong *et al.*, 2003; Shrestha and Dhillion, 2003). This shows that the passing down of customs from generation to generation is now in imminent danger of disappearance (Bonet and Valles,

2003). Therefore, this comprehensive ethno-biological study was carried out to document traditional medicinal practices in Oyo State. This article, focusing on the traditional medicinal remedies for skin-related infections, is part of the findings from the general ethnobiological survey done in Oyo State, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Area

Oyo state was established in 1976 from the defunct Western Region, with the total estimated population of 6,617,720 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2007) mainly Yoruba people. The land area is 28,454 km<sup>2</sup>. The indigenes are mainly Oyo, Ibadan, Oke-Ogun and Ibarapa peoples, and notable cities include Ibadan (the State capital), Oyo, Ogbomosho, Saki, Okeho, Iseyin, Kishi, Eruwa and many others.

The state is divided into thirty-three Local Government areas. Greater parts of the state fall within Guinea savanna, while Ibadan is classified as a derived savannah. The southern fringes of the state are still being dominated by tracts of rainforests. Oyo state is located in Southwest region of Nigeria (Figures 1 and 2) between latitude 8°00 N and longitude 4°00 E. The main indigenous occupation of the people is farming, while arts and crafts are popular in Oyo town.

The areas visited during this study include Saki (Saki West LGA), Sepeteri (Saki East LGA), Apata (Ido LGA), Oyo (Atiba LGA), Ikoyi (Oriire LGA), Ayetoro (Kajola LGA), Karimu village, Abule Tapa (Iwajowa LGA), Idi-Ayunre, Buso-gboro (Oluyole), Iseyin (Iseyin LGA), Fiditi (Afijio LGA), Ebedi and Modeke (Oorelope LGA), Ayepe (Oriire LGA), Bode (Ibadan South East LGA) and Idere (Ibarapa Central LGA).

### Ethnobiological Survey

The main data sources consisted of a series of semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires as well as informal interviews administered on local herb sellers, hunters, herbalists and other groups of people rich in traditional medicine knowledge. The administration of questionnaires and informal interviews were done for three years between November 2008 and January 2012. This involved repeated visits to the selected respondents in the areas visited.

The questionnaire administration and interviews were done in their native language (Yoruba language), while the information gathered was sorted, the local names of plants mentioned were interpreted to their respective biological names using the publication by Gbile and Soladoye (2002) and other relevant previously published research papers.



Figure 1. Map of Nigeria showing Oyo State

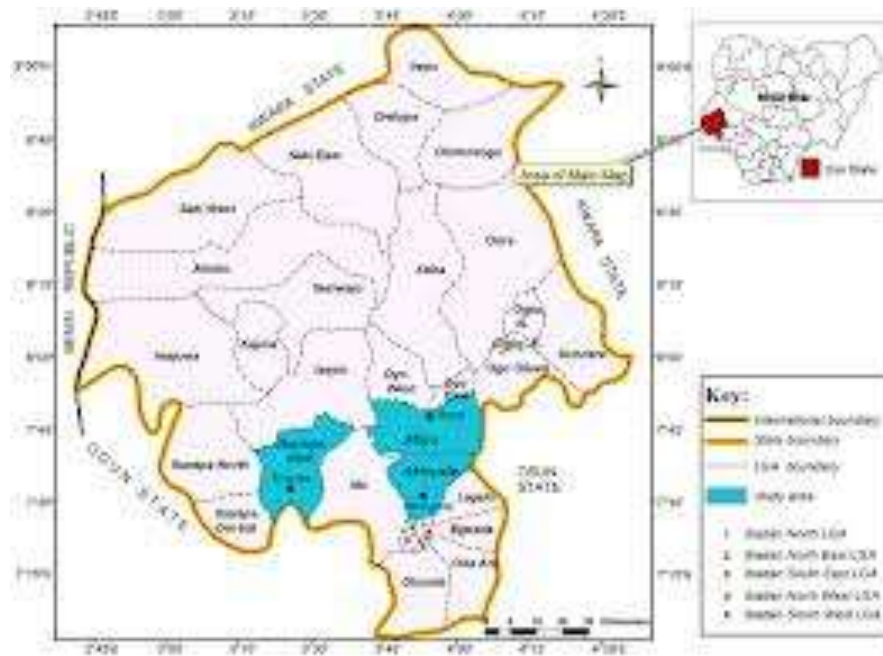


Figure 2. Map of Oyo State, Nigeria

## RESULTS

The result is a compendium of traditional medicine practice in Oyo state compiled over a period of three years, with focus on skin-related infections.

### Respondents' identity

Table 1 indicated that a total of 31 people were interviewed for traditional medicine practice in Oyo state,

**Table 1:** Demographic data of the respondents on the traditional medicinal practices for the treatment of skin infections in Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Demographic information	Frequency (n=31)	Percentage
1	Gender Male	13	41.9
	Female	18	58.1
Age category (years)			
2	Below 30	0	0
	31-40	0	0
	41-50	21	67.7
	51-60	5	16.1
	61-70	2	6.5
	Above 70	3	9.7
Highest level of education			
3	No formal	18	58.1
	Primary	10	32.3
	Secondary	2	6.4
	Diploma	0	0
	Degree	1	3.2
Main Occupation			
4	Hunter	1	3.2
	Civil servant/retired	2	6.4
	Herb seller	16	51.6
	Herb collector	2	6.4
	Herbalist/Priest/Priestess	10	32.3

13 of which were males while the remaining 18 were females. All the herb sellers interviewed were women and in addition, majority (21) of the respondents was within the age range of 40 and 50 (Table 1). The occupations of the respondents include a Government civil service retiree, 16 herb sellers, 10 herbalists, 2 herb collectors and a hunter (Table 1). Only 1 of the respondents was a University graduate, majority (18) were illiterates, while the rest were primary school leavers or drop-outs and secondary school leavers (Table 1). Furthermore all, except the retired civil servant, claimed that they inherited their vocation from their parents, and possibly their ethnomedicinal knowledge as well. It should be noted that all the respondents were Yoruba speaking people of Oyo state.

### Ethnobiological survey

A total of 54 traditional medicinal practices were described in this study for several skin related diseases, which include skin rashes, eczema, ringworm, acne, baby skin rashes, insect repellent/bite, leprosy, toilet disease, whitlow, aftershave, wound antiseptic/dressing/sore/inflamed sores, procrastinated injury, measles, boils, abscess, chicken pox and small pox (Table 2). Furthermore, a total of 47 plants spread

across 30 plant families were encountered in this survey used in the treatment of skin related diseases in the study areas (Table 3). Of these 47 plants recorded, *A. vera* had the highest frequency of traditional medicinal use in this study. It was followed by *C. aurantifolia*, *A. conyzoides*, *O. gratissimum* and *V. amygdalina*. Of the 30 plant families, Euphorbiaceae had the highest (5) number of species representatives.

The mode of administration of the herbal treatments varied greatly, ranging from oral administration (drinking, licking, chewing and eating), topical application, inhalation, bathing, insertion, rinsing and washing, incision and rubbing among others (Table 2). Similarly, the method of preparation varied widely. The methods encountered in this study include infusion, decoction, maceration, squeezing, burning/charring, mixing with oil/cream/perfume, mixing with native soap, grinding/pounding, drying and pulverization into powder and many other variant methods (Table 2). Two animal or animal parts-*Archatina archatina* (giant land snail) and *Coturnix ypsilophora* (brown quail) were encountered to have therapeutic purposes on skin related infections in this study (Table 2). In addition, only 7 non-living ingredients were used in the ethnomedicinal preparations described in this study. These include native soap, potash, palm oil, leprosy finger, honey, sulphur and "elego".

**Table 2.** Traditional medicinal practices for the treatment of Skin-related infections in Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Disease	Plants, parts used, preparation and dosage
1	Skin infections, skin rashes, eczema, ringworm, acne, baby skin rashes	Grind <i>Musa nana</i> fruit peel ( <i>omimi</i> ) with <i>Senna alata</i> leaves and mix with native soap for bathing the child to treat baby skin rashes
		Bark of <i>Khaya senegalensis</i> , <i>Securidaca longepedunculata</i> and leaves of <i>Euphorbia laterifolia</i> are pounded in mortar and added to native soap. The mixture is used to bathe the child to treat baby skin rashes
		Infusion of leaves of <i>Pseudocedrela kotschyi</i> and <i>Syzygium guineensis</i> . Half cup is given to the child twice daily to treat baby skin rashes
		Blend <i>Erythrophleum suaveolens</i> bark, <i>Aframomum melegueta</i> rhizomes together and add it to your body cream and apply on your body to treat skin rashes in adults
		Mix <i>Aloe vera</i> leaf juice, quill eggs, <i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> fruit juice, and native soap together for bathing to treat skin rashes in adults
		Apply <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> leaves' extract topically on skin rashes in adults
		Apply the leaf extract of <i>Momordica charantia</i> on topically on body part infected with ringworm to treat skin rashes in adults
		Apply <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> leaf juice topically on the skin affected by body rashes, itching, ringworm and parasitic infections
		Mix <i>Aloe vera</i> gel with pure honey, apply on it the affected skin part to treat skin rashes in adults
		Cut <i>Mucuna sloanei</i> , <i>Xylopia quintasii</i> and <i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> fruits in pieces; soak in water till next day and drink a cup from it twice daily to treat skin infections
		Apply the sap from unripe <i>Carica papaya</i> fruit topically to treat eczema
		Apply <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> leaf extract topically on ringworm infected skin
		Apply <i>Ricinus communis</i> seed oil extract to treat skin infections
		Blend <i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> root, add small <i>Parkia biglobosa</i> (locust beans), <i>Piper guineense</i> fruits, <i>Armillaria mellea</i> and pork and cook it as soup. Let the infected person eat everything in the morning to treat skin infections
		Drink <i>Senna alata</i> leaf juice or bath with it to treat skin infections such as eczema and rashes.
		Bathe with <i>Momordica charantia</i> leaves to treat rashes
		Boil and drink red <i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i> leaves or bathe with it to treat skin infections
		Grind sulphur, mix with <i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i> (shea) butter and apply topically on eczema every night before going to bed till it clears completely
		Apply <i>Aloe vera</i> leaf gel on the skin daily before going to bed to treat skin rashes, eczema and acne
		Apply <i>Jatropha curcas</i> sap on the skin to treat dermatitis and ringworm
Grind and mix potash and native soap with the juice of ten <i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> fruits. To treat scabies, rashes, ringworm and eczema, scrape the affected part and apply the herbal mixture consistently for four days.		
To treat pimples on the face, wash your face every morning with <i>Citrus limon</i> fruit juice, and at night, apply <i>Aloe vera</i> leaf gel on the face		
To treat rashes on the genitals, squeeze out the extract of <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> and <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> leaves with water in a cup, drink a glass cup of the juice extract four times daily. Mould the remnants of the squeezed leaves into a ball and rub hard on the affected parts every night.		
Rub <i>Morinda lucida</i> leaf juice on the skin infected with eczema every day.		
2	Insect repellent/ bite	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> seed oil is rubbed on the body as insect repellent
		Apply leaf extract of <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> to insect bitten part to stop irritation after insect bite
3	Leprosy	Squeeze <i>Momordica charantia</i> leaves and drink to treat leprosy



Table 2. Contd.

4	Toilet disease	Squeeze <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> and <i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i> leaves with water, add little salt and potash and leave till next day. Drink half a glass cup three times daily to treat toilet disease
		Grind <i>Zingiber officinale</i> rhizomes, <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> leaves together and apply it on the affected genitals morning and night for 3 days to treat toilet disease
5	Whitlow	Apply palm oil on the affected part, then create a hole in a half cut <i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> fruit and insert the affected finger in it. Leave the finger inside for a few minutes. The whitlow would soon burst
		Grind <i>Securidaca longepedunculata</i> root very well and apply on the affected part
6	Aftershave	<i>Adenopus breviflorus</i> fruit juice is applied to skin after shaving
		Apply <i>Aloe vera</i> leaf gel on the skin after shaving
7	Wound antiseptic/ dressing/sores/ inflamed sores	Chew bark of <i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> and pour on a wound spot as an antiseptic for blood clotting/coagulant/antibleeding
		Apply <i>Chromolaena odorata</i> leaf juice on the fresh wound
		Apply <i>Catharanthus roseus</i> leaf juice on the fresh wound
		Apply <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> leaf sap to fresh wound for quick healing
		Mix <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> leaf sap with <i>Aloe vera</i> leaf gel and apply on fresh wound
		Boil <i>Bixa orellana</i> seeds in water and use the extract to disinfect wounds
		Roasted leaf pulp of <i>Carica papaya</i> is placed on wound for healing
		Infusion of <i>Psidium guajava</i> flowers is applied topically on wounds for healing
		Take infusion of <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> flowers twice daily and apply the chopped leaves of the same plant on the inflamed sores.
		Apply honey on the skin affected by burns, hot water, fire, scalds or hot oil for relief and quick healing
8	Procrastinated injury	Mix sap from leprous finger and half bottle of product from palm fruit cotyledon very well. Divide it into two parts. Wash the wound with the first part in the first week; take the second part orally in the second week, one spoon daily to heal procrastinated injury
		Blend <i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> leaves, <i>Cyathula prostrata</i> leaves and <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> leaves together, mix it with "a special kind of Shea butter". Apply it on the wounds always to heal procrastinated injury
9	Measles	Boil a snail, <i>Mondia whiteii</i> leaves, one <i>Aframomum melegueta</i> rhizome, <i>Piper guineense</i> fruit, fresh elego together with <i>Adenopus breviflorus</i> fruit as stew and eat.
		Burn <i>Pistia stratiotes</i> leaves, three local eggs, one <i>Aframomum melegueta</i> rhizome. Mix half with native soap for bathing and half with palm oil for licking and rubbing body.
		Roots of <i>Olax subscorpioidea</i> , <i>Zingiber officinale</i> rhizomes and leaves of <i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> are grinded with native soap. The patient should bathe with it
		A decoction of <i>Costus afer</i> rhizome is taken orally three times daily to treat measles
10	Boils and abscess	Mix <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> leaf juice extract with palm wine and rub it on the skin and also take a glass cup of the mixture twice daily to treat measles
		<i>Bryophyllum pinnatum</i> leaf and root maceration is applied to treat boils and abscess
11	Chicken pox/small pox	Decoction of <i>Cajanus cajan</i> root is taken twice daily to treat chicken pox
		<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> leaf juice and palm wine to rub body and drink a glass cup daily to treat small pox and chicken pox

## DISCUSSION

Skin-related infections is one of the most common infections among humans, since the skin is the organ that covers the entire human body and have direct interaction with the external environment. In addition, adverse weather conditions, lack of access to portable water coupled with unhygienic environment that characterized

most parts of rural Nigeria may be responsible for high incidence of skin infections. Many authors have also linked skin infections to climate change (Grover, 2009; Andersen, 2011). Furthermore, skin infections are one of the major infections that affect babies and infants (Sladden and Johnston, 2005). Oyo state is unique in history being the seat of power of the Yoruba people in the pre-colonial

**Table 3.** List of plants used for the treatment of skin infections in Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Name of plant	Family	Local/common name	Part used
1	<i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i> Muell Arg.	Euphorbiaceae	Jinwinini, Red Acalypha	Leaf
2	<i>Adenopus breviflorus</i> Benth.	Cucurbitaceae	Tagiri, ito	Fruit juice
3	<i>Aframomum melegueta</i> (Rosc.) K. Schum.	Zingiberaceae	Atare, alligator pepper	Fruit
4	<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L.	Asteraceae	Imi-esu, goat weed	Flower, leaf, leaf sap, whole plant
5	<i>Aloe vera</i> Linn.	Liliaceae	Eti-erin, Aloe vera	Leaf, leaf gel
6	<i>Armillaria mellea</i> (Vahl.) P. Kumm.	Physalacriaceae	Olu otiripa, honey mushroom	Entire structure
7	<i>Bixa orellana</i> Linn.	Bixaceae	Osunbuke, aje, Arnatto	Seed, bark, leaf
8	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> L.	Nyctinaginaceae	Etiponla, hogweed	Leaf
9	<i>Bryophyllum pinnatum</i> (Lam.) Oken	Crassulaceae	Abamoda, resurrection plant	Leaf juice
10	<i>Cajanus cajan</i> (L.) Millsp.	Papilionaceae	Otili, pigeonpea	Leaf, root, seed
11	<i>Carica papaya</i> Linn.	Caricaceae	Ibepe, pawpaw	Seed, sap, leaf, leaf extract, fruit
12	<i>Catharanthus roseus</i> Linn. G.Donn	Apocynaceae	Apabida pupa, rosy periwinkle	Leaf juice
13	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i> (Linn.) King & Robinson	Asteraceae	Akintola/Awolowo, siam weed	Leaf juice
14	<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> (Christm.) Swingle	Rutaceae	Osan wewe, Lime fruit	Fruit, leaf
15	<i>Citrus limon</i> (L.) Burm.f	Rutaceae	Lemon	Fruit
16	<i>Costus afer</i> Ker Gawl	Zingiberaceae	Ireke-omode, Twisted ginger	Root, bark, stem, rhizome
17	<i>Cyathula prostrata</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Sawerepepe, pasture weed	Leaf
18	<i>Erythrophleum suaveolens</i> (Guill. & Perr) Brenan	Caesalpiniaceae	Igi obo, sassafras	Bark
19	<i>Euphorbia laterifolia</i> Schum. and Thonn	Euphorbiaceae	Enu opiri, little cactus	Leaf
20	<i>Jatropha curcas</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Lapalapa funfun, physic nut	Leaf, seed, root
21	<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i> Linn.	Euphorbiaceae	Lapalapa pupa, red physic nut	Leaf
22	<i>Khaya senegalensis</i> (Desr.) A. Juss	Meliaceae	Oganwo, Dry zone mahogany	Bark
23	<i>Lecaniodiscus cupanioides</i> Planch. ex Benth.	Sapindaceae	Akika, aaka	Bark
24	<i>Momordica charantia</i> Linn.	Cucurbitaceae	Ejinrin-were, bitter gourd	Leaf, fruit, whole plant
25	<i>Mondia whitei</i> L.	Periplocaceae	Isirigun, Mondia	Bark, root, leaf
26	<i>Morinda lucida</i> Benth.	Rubiaceae	Oruwo, brimstone tree	Leaf, root
27	<i>Mucuna solanei</i> Fawcett & Rendle	Papilionaceae	Ina funfun, stinging bean	Fruit, seed, leaf
28	<i>Musa nana</i> J. de Loureiro	Musaceae	Ogede wewe, omimi, banana	Fruit, sap
29	<i>Musa sapientum</i> Linn.	Musaceae	Ogede agbagba, Plantain	Fruit, sap
30	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> SW. Afr.	Solanaceae	Taba, tobacco plant	Leaf, fruit
31	<i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Efinrin, Basil	Leaf, scent
32	<i>Olax subscorpioidea</i> Oliv.	Olacaceae	Ifon	Root
33	<i>Parkia biglobosa</i> (Jacq.) R. Br.	Mimosaceae	Irugba, locust beans	Fruit/seed
34	<i>Piper guineense</i> Schum & Thonn.	Piperaceae	Iyere, black pepper	Fruit, bark
35	<i>Pistia stratiotes</i> L.	Araceae	Ojuoro, water lettuce	Leaf
36	<i>Pseudocedrela kotschyii</i> (Schweinf.) Harms	Meliaceae	Emi-gbegiri, Pseudocedrela	Leaf
37	<i>Psidium guajava</i> L.	Myrtaceae	Gurofa, Guava	Stem, leaf, flower
38	<i>Rauvolfia vomitoria</i> Afzel.	Apocynaceae	Asofeyeje, olora igbo, ira igbo, serpentwood	Leaf, bark, root
39	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Laa, Castorplant	Seed, seed oil
40	<i>Securidaca longepedunculata</i> Fres.	Polygalaceae	Ipeta, Violet tree	Bark, root
41	<i>Senna alata</i> L. Roxburgh	Caesalpiniaceae	Asunwon oyinbo, candle bush	Leaf, flower
42	<i>Syzygium guineensis</i> (Willd.) DC	Myrtaceae	Adere, waterberry	Leaf
43	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> Del.	Asteraceae	Ewuro, bitter leaf	Leaf
44	<i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i> (Gaertn. f.)	Sapotaceae	Elemi, Shea butter tree	Shea butter, fruit
45	<i>Xylopiya quintasii</i> Pierre ex Engl. & Diels	Annonaceae	Eru awonka	Fruits, seed, leaf
46	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> (Roscoe)	Zingiberaceae	Ata-ile, ginger	Rhizomes
47	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss	Meliaceae	Dongoyaro, neem tree	Leaf, bark, seed oil

era. Furthermore, Ibadan being the State capital was established by warlords from various other parts of the Yoruba land (Southwest Nigeria), with each of them bringing their cultural beliefs and indigenous knowledge and practices which are transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore, it is most likely that many of the herbal medicinal practices reported in this study are similar to those practised in other parts of Southwest Nigeria.

It was observed that many of the described ethnomedicines used for the treatment of skin infections has become very popular among the general populace. The use of *A. vera*, *Vitellaria paradoxa*, sulphur, *Vernonia amygdalina*, *Acalypha wilkesiana*, *Jatropha curcas* and *Jatropha gossypifolia* for skin infections are very common among the people to the extent that industrial products using the plants of *A. vera* and *V. paradoxa* are produced, distributed, sold and used globally. Furthermore, the use of *A. wilkesiana* for the treatment of baby skin rashes is very common among nursing mothers in the entire Yoruba land, while *J. gossypifolia* gained its local name from the skin infection it is used to treat.

Topical application is perhaps the main means of administration of traditional medicines on the affected skin. This of course, is linked with the indigenous knowledge that the parasites responsible for many of the skin infections are exoparasites, most of which are fungi, found within the region of infections. Meanwhile, some herbal therapeutic practices that involved oral administration of concoctions, infusions and other related herbal products are done with the knowledge that the parasites causing the skin infections are in the blood.

Therefore, the importance of indigenous knowledge in traditional medicinal practices cannot be overemphasized, and it is of utmost importance to preserve this indigenous knowledge so that they will not go into extinction.

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