

Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a vector in combating COVID-19

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Abstract

Indigenous Knowledge Systems have recently been regarded as an important commodity in global health development, thanks to local teas in China and a herbal remedy in Madagascar, just to mention a few. Although recommendations by World Health Organization in the 1978 Health for all Declaration highlighted the need for people to tap into their traditions and practices in Primary Health Care (PHC), this was largely ignored. The pandemic has caused a number of loopholes into the global functionality, for instance, the novel coronavirus 2019 has shaken World Food Security, exposed thousands of households into poverty worldwide and crippled multiple health systems and paved way for a new pandemic – death by hunger. Indigenous people with their IKS are a living proof of humankind's resilience, with their Indigenous Knowledge Systems they have survived invasions, pandemics, and outbreaks for centuries, and at this point in time IKS may still be used as a vector to combat Covid-19 pandemic. To fight COVID-19, indigenous people can resort to hot-water-bath therapy (*ukufutha* in the isiNdebele Zimbabwean language) to kill the virus in one's windpipe; they can also adapt to indigenous food preservation in order to sustain consumption of food and cultivate their resilience when there's lack of food security. The presentation will highlight interventions by local communities on how they have deployed indigenous knowledge systems to treat COVID-19 symptoms and also enhance food security in light of job losses and lockdowns.