

abstract

Despite the dramatic rise in herbal medicine consumption in both developed and developing countries, few studies have been done to document their potential benefits during and after pregnancy and the long term adverse effects to both mother and fetus. In Machakos district the doctor: patient ratio which stands at 1: 62, 325, inadequate number of health facilities and lack of adequate skills amongst reproductive health staff contribute towards more mothers delivering at home.

The objectives of the study were to document pre and post pregnancy complications and identify medicinal plants used for their management. A cross sectional study of all willing and practising TBA residing in Kangundo and Kyevaluki sub locations was carried out. A 35 questionnaire was used to collect data on pregnancy and post partum complications, herbal remedies, plant part, and route of administration and dose levels. Fifty three plant species belonging to 32 families were identified. Plant species belonging to Compositae family were most commonly mentioned followed by Euphorbiaceae, Labiatae and Rutaceae. 14 plant species were considered morpho as they lacked identification characters and were difficult to find during the field excursions because of their rarity. The plant species used for the management of delayed and protracted labor were relatively few (n= 10), while those for the management of post partum haemorrhage, abortion, morning sickness and pregnancy edema were many (n= 44). It is important to document and undertake research on traditionally used herbs in order to find scientific evidence for the claims as to the therapeutic efficacy of plants (Sofowora, 1993).