Acute renal failure following the use of herbal remedies.

Abstract:

Acute renal failure (ARF) complicated the use of traditional herbal remedies in six adult patients seen at Kenyatta National Hospital in a 2-year period (August 1984 to August 1986). This comprised 10.9% of all the cases of ARF and 24% of the cases of ARF due to medical causes. All the patients were oliguric and the period of oliguria in the four patients who survived ranged between 19-57 days (mean 26.3 days). Five of the patients had evidence of fluid overload. The blood urea nitrogen and serum creatinine were elevated in all the patients. The serum sodium was normal in all, while the serum potassium was elevated in 2 cases. Identity of the herbal medication was unknown in all the cases. The indication was abdominal pain in 4 cases, infertility and abdominal pain in one and prophylaxis against witchcraft in the other. All the patients were started on haemodialysis, two of them having had periods of peritoneal dialysis for 12 and 16 days. Two patients died. Of the four surviving patients, follow up has been carried out for 8, 6, 5 and 4 months. At four months follow up the creatinine clearance in the 4 surviving patients have been 54, 63, 51 and 43 ml/min.