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Ethnomedical and ethnopharmacological aspects and sociocultural treatment of African high blood pressure in Cameroon

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In Africa, as for many other diseases, diagnosis of high blood pressure is delayed often with complications and very high blood pressure values. In comparison with European subjects, the high blood pressure in South Saharan-African subjects, has a higher prevalence, is more severe, develops earlier and with a higher percentage of target organ complications that include strokes, renal failure and heart failure. The prevalence of high blood pressure is increasing among black Africans living in the African continent who have neglected the African way of life or among the Africans that are migrating to western countries. All these particularities are linked to two factors: Aggravating role of environment that reacts together with ethnic predisposition. African beliefs such as curse, evil spirits, witchcraft, bewitchment, social problems and the worship of the death, create psychological fear which can maintain high hypertensive values in patients. The present study helps to identify and document medicinal hypotensive plants, sociocultural ways of local therapists to resolve psychological problems and how avoid environmental aggravation. We have conducted an ethnomedical and ethnopharmacological survey nearby 1131 interviewers living in 58 socio-cultural groups random distributed in ecosystems of Cameroon. Seventy-four (74) herbal medicines used to fight against essential and secondary hypertension, based on 83 plants, were recorded. The local therapists' role in management of psychological problems was also revealed. This work may help to reduce African hypertension prevalence and give hope to black subjects of hypertension. Herbal medicines which will be more effective in the management of hypertension will be exploited in drugs' discovery worldwide.

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