



Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Topic: The use of traditional medicines in the 21st century.

Chair: Alexa Negrete Silva

Moderator: Maythe Pepi Guerra

The World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1948, is an international specialized agency of the United Nations which is devoted to improving the world's public health and aims to provide each person access to fundamental and vital healthcare. WHO main work areas are health systems; health through the life-course; non-communicable and communicable diseases; preparation, supervision and response; and support services.

The name of the World Health Organization was given until 1948. Before, it was called the International Sanitary Conferences. This committee was originally held on June 23, 1851, lasting a total of 13 conferences focusing on combating diseases such as cholera and yellow fever. The successes of all these conferences resulted in the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau and the Office international d'Hygiène Publique. After World War II, the League of Nations established the World Health Organization of the League of Nations. After that, the UN absorbed all of the other committees along with this one to form what we now know as WHO.

The World Health Organization states "Traditional medicine has a long history. It is the sum of the total knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness."

Traditional medicine has been an important topic to WHO, because the theme itself has a lot of challenges: lack of research data, lack of financial support for research, lack of mechanisms to monitor safety of the practice of traditional medicine, lack of education and training for providers, lack of expertise within national health authorities, and control agencies. Such tools are needed to know more about traditional medicine, to support general technical guidance for research and evaluation of traditional medicine, and to have a national capacity-building and provision of research databases.

Traditional medicine is recognized as a fundamental resource for millions of people's health, and it represents the millennial knowledge over mother nature and medicinal plants that have been preserved, and have an invaluable use. Traditional medicine is categorized as an essential component of the tangible and intangible heritage of the world's cultures, a wealth of information, resources and practices of development, well being and a factor of identity of many people of the planet. Nowadays traditional medicine is being used and is spreading fast in several countries, because of its advantages, for example, the cost is minimal, its more accessible for people that have a lack of resources, it is cheaper than a prescription medication, another advantage is their availability, in some countries of the world, traditional medicine is the only accessible source to heal an injury, and finally they are well tolerated by the patient and they have fewer side effects. But professionals are confronting relative questions of security, efficacy, quality, availability, preservation, and the rules of the use of traditional medicine. That is why the World Health Organization has made a long term solution that works strategically with the

correct analysis and experts that can help on the knowledge of traditional medicine, this strategy began in 2014 and is planned to end in 2023. Our main goal is to take advantage of the possible contributions of traditional medicine on health, wellness, and in the attention centered on people as the “universal health coverage”. Another goal is to promote the safe and informed use of the aforementioned medicine. And lastly but not least, to develop political dynamics, rules, and guidelines. This plan has two important measures: The first one is to define and understand traditional medicine, to compare with conventional medicines, and identify present and future necessities. The second one is to develop policies, regulations, and guidelines on alternative medicine in as many.

The World Health Organization has taken several actions on this matter. Our committee surveyed that a total of 113 Member States answered by mentioning the most common problems faced by the use of traditional medicine. Lack of research data: 99% of the Member States have face this difficulty. There is not enough information about traditional medicine, because in the past countries didn't really have an interest in them or at least not in a governmental way, so nowadays the information about this type of medicine is limited, and there is also a lot of fake information, and a big risk of buying these medicine is that there are people who sell fake traditional medicine. Lack of financial support for research: 86% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. Money is needed for the deeper investigation of traditional medicine because it's needed to have a national capacity-building to investigate the present and future uses of the traditional medicine, the side effects that each remedy has, etc. And money is also necessary for the implementation of the medicine. Lack of mechanisms to monitor the safety of traditional medicine practice: 75% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. And no law prohibits the unmoderated use of traditional medicine any person all over the world can use and

sell this medicine when and how they want without any punishment. And the government of most countries don't even know where this medicine is practiced, and/or being sold. Lack of education and training for traditional medicine providers: 73% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. Of course, there are no specialized doctors of traditional medicine so it's really hard to find a person that knows about traditional medicine and practices it correctly. In some countries, people know more about traditional medicine like here in Mexico that we have “Boticas” that are drug stores but for traditional medicines in these places, they even prepare them in the store. Lack of expertise with national health authorities and control agencies: 70% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. Lack of appropriate mechanisms to monitor and regulate traditional medicine providers: 69% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. Not enough sources of information, and/or experts. The intervention of the government isn't enough either. Lack of appropriate mechanisms to control and regulate herbal products: 64% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. There are no official stores nor official sellers. Lack of cooperation channels between national health authorities to share information about traditional medicine: 63% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. No one has provided scientifically proven information to the public neither to the authorities to know what is right and what is wrong or what is real and what is fake. Lack of mechanisms to monitor the safety of traditional medicine products: 63% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. This is because everyone can sell and/or practice traditional medicine without permission. Lack of appropriate mechanisms to control and regulate traditional medicine advertising and claims: 62% of the Member States have faced this difficulty. Others: 20% of the Member States have faced this difficulty.

Plants, herbs, and ethnobotanicals have been used since the early days of humankind and are still used throughout the world for health promotion and treatment of disease. This proves that traditional medicine is an important irreplaceable medicine that hasn't had the opportunity to stand out and evolve as the years pass because the governments of most countries don't see traditional medicine relevant as they should. Still, as you can see there are several ways that countries can contribute to solving the limitations that come with traditional medicine. Just ask yourself what are the solutions that can help eradicate this limitation to help medicine evolve.

For each delegate to be able to do their position papers here are some valuable solutions that might help.

1. To certify businesses that sell and/or practice traditional medicine.
2. File the use of clandestine traditional medicine.
3. Put labels that say what the product that is being sold contains.
4. Try to convince governments to make laws that help with the use of traditional medicine, for example, a law to prohibit the business of traditional medicine without a proper certificate.
5. And lastly, it could be to do more research in all the countries that belong to the World Health Organization to increase the amount of plants and knowledge about each one.

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