

Trends in South African traditional medicine: ethnobotany, phytochemistry and biotechnology

Ambrose Okem

North-West University, South Africa

To date, South Africa is one of the few nations that have made significant progress to integrate traditional and complementary medicine into the legislative framework for health practitioners. There are over 190000 registered traditional health practitioners providing healthcare needs to millions of South African. According to the WHO recent classification, South Africa can be categorised as having an inclusive system. Many regulatory policies are placed now to fully integrate traditional medicine into

the national healthcare system. The recent surge in the demands for herbal medicinal plant products has led to steady growth in traditional medicine market making it a multibillion rand economy in South Africa. However, many of these products currently sold are without control due to lack of appropriate registration system. According to the Red Data List of South African Plants, most of the highly valued medicinal plants are listed as threaten, declining or at the verge of extinction due to over exploitation of the wild population. *In vitro* propagation techniques offer promising perspectives to overcome the problem of overexploitation of medicinal plants from the wild. Plant biotechnology improves the commercial production of highly useful bioactive compounds.

aokem39@gmail.com