Medicinal Plants’ Use and Safety During Pregnancy and Lactation

Zacchaeus Oni Omogbadegun

Computer & Information Sciences, Software Engineering & Intelligent Systems (Healthcare Informatics Research), Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

More than 80% of the world’s population relies on medicinal plants for principal health care. Women are the largest consumers of healthcare, and this extends to their utilization of complementary and alternative medicine. The use of drugs is avoided as much as possible during pregnancy. Pregnant women are concerned about all medications that may affect their health, the health of their foetus, and the pregnancy outcome. As the foetus grows rapidly, it is vulnerable to substances that affect cellular growth and division. Few published clinical trials or investigations of these substances establishing the efficacy and/or toxicity of the preparations at specific doses exist. Limited standards for the preparation and for the established amounts of specific ingredients in the products marketed abound. Few regulating bodies that certify the products sold or doses used exist. Some of the products available worldwide contain unknown contaminants such as lead and/or arsenic from the agricultural or manufacturing processes. Numerous herbs with devastating effects and considered potentially contraindicated during pregnancy exist. A safe and effective medication would be a welcome addition to the therapeutic repertoire. Complementary and Alternative Medicine practitioners of modern time need currency on product/therapy data on therapeutic efficacy, product quality and safety, adverse reactions, and herb-drug interactions. This paper addressed the above concerns in a Multimedia-based Medicinal Plants Sustainability Management System that provides healthcare practitioners and mothers-to-be with the best available evidence-based safety information on the products they may choose to use or not to use during pregnancy and lactation.