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## Abstract

**Background:** An inventory of the medicinal plants used by herbalists to treat various ailments in Tindiret area of Nandi County, Kenya was conducted by a team comprising of medical researchers and botanists with a view to preserve indigenous ethnobotanical knowledge and potential research and development of new drugs.

**Materials and Methods:** Data was collected from practicing herbalists through semi-structured interviews, group discussions and observations. The types of medical conditions treated, treatment methods as well as the plants used were recorded.

**Results and Conclusion:** A total of 50 medicinal plants belonging to 28 families used for the treatment of 32 medical conditions were recorded. The disease conditions which were treated by the highest number of plants were abdominal/colic pains with 15 different plants recorded (13%), respiratory disorders 15(13%) and infertility 14 (12%). The most widely used medicinal plants were *Vernonia amygdalina* 7(7%), *Toddalia asiatica* 6(6%), *Aloe kedongensis* 5(5%) and *Zanthoxylum gillettii* 5(5%); whereas the families with the highest number of plant usage were *Fabaceae* 8(14%), *Lamiaceae* 4(8%) and *Solanaceae* 4(8%) plants respectively. The study documents important ethno-medical knowledge on the plants used by herbalists in Tindiret sub-county.

**Key words:** Ethnopharmacology, Indigenous knowledge, Traditional medicine, Research, Conservation

## Introduction

Ethnopharmacology is broadly defined as the study of substances used medicinally, often derived from plants, by different ethnic groups. Historically, natural products have been used as ingredients to develop new drugs, and are still an important source (Koehn et al., 2005; Li et al., 2009; Heinrich, 2014). Unlike Asia, many of the traditional plants used by herbalists have not been documented in Kenya, despite the risks of the knowledge disappearing, owing to several factors (Kigen GK et al., 2013). The documentation of the various plants and their medicinal uses will therefore conserve indigenous knowledge and provide an important database for future research and potential development of new drugs.

## Materials and Methods

### Study Area

The survey was conducted in Meteitei area of Tindiret Sub-county, in the southern part of Nandi County (**Figure 1**). The County is located in the western part of Kenya at longitude 35°25'E. latitude 0°34'N and covers an area of 2,884 km<sup>2</sup> (Nandi, 2013; Wikipedia, 2013). It is endowed with a beautiful topography that mainly consists of the scenic Nandi Hills. It has rich volcanic soils, cool and wet climate with temperatures ranging from 15°C to 26°C, with rainfall of between 1,200mm and 2,000mm per annum. Tindiret region is characterized by a mountainous terrain (up to 2150m), with steep slopes descending into the Nyando escarpment (1300m). This provides varied ecological zones with swathes of the Nandi forest at the top and wood, bushes and savannah grassland with swamps at the escarpment (Nandi, 2013). The residents in the county are mainly Nandis, one of the larger Kalenjin subtribes (Gabriel Kigen et al., 2014; Wikipedia, 2015).



**Figure 1:** Map of Nandi County showing its position relative to the Kenyan Map and various sub- counties. Accessed on 24/04/2015 from KENYA MPYA -<http://www.kenyampya.com/index.php?county=Nandi>

## Data Collection

Field surveys were carried out between February 2013 and July 2014. The research team consisted of professionals from the medical field and botany. It included two pharmacologists (GK & AM), one physician (FS), a surgeon (JK), an ophthalmologist (HR), a taxonomist (BW) and a plant specialist (WK). We also had two local herbalists (SC and Emily) who accompanied us each time we visited their colleagues. Semi structured interviews were used to collect information from the herbalists. The interviews were conducted in Kalenjin or Kiswahili, and were done at their practices, which in most cases were their residences. We interviewed a total of 45 herbalists aged between 38 and 70 years, with majority being female (28). Details of the medical conditions treated including the symptoms, methods of treatment, plants and herbal preparations used, local plant names, methods of collection of the herbs and any other information relevant to the practice were recorded. In case there were any patients undergoing treatment, they were also interviewed in order to corroborate the evidence of their treatment with the claims by the herbalists. Following the interviews, the informants were requested to accompany the research team to the fields in order to identify the plants used. The plant specimen and their habitats were then photographed and collected. The collected specimens were then identified by BW and WK as per taxonomic keys (Beentje et al., 1994; Agnew, 2013), and the voucher specimens pressed, dried and deposited at the University of Eldoret Botanical Herbarium.

## Results

A total of 50 medicinal plants belonging 28 families were identified (**Table 1, 2**). We did not manage to see two plants going by the local names of “*Mborusiat*” and “*Kipchilgatwet*” which are used in the treatment of respiratory disorders and abdominal pains/diarrhoea respectively. We were informed that the first plant is found in deep forest, whereas the second is found in the rocky areas in the highlands; both areas having rough terrain which we could not access. There were also three other plants which we identified *Artemesia abyssinica*, *Pseudarthria hookeri* & *Tithonia diversifolia* that none of the herbalists could remember their traditional names.

Table 1: Medicinal Plant Uses

	Botanical name	Family	Local Name	Voucher No.	Parts used	Method of preparation	Plant Uses
1.	<i>Ajuga remota</i> Benth	LAMIACEAE	<i>Chelelgatiat</i>	WK/02/15/045	Leaves	Press/crush leaves and add water	Abdominal pain & coughs in children
2.	<i>Albizia gummifera</i> (J.F.Gmel.) C.A. Sm	FABACEAE	<i>Seet</i>	WK/02/15/011	Bark	Boiled (oral thrush), For post partum bleeding, crush bark and add a little water and administer	Oral thrush in children Post partum bleeding
3.	<i>Aloe kedongensis</i> Reynolds	ALOACEAE	<i>Tangaratwet</i>	WK/02/15/044	Roots	Boiled & administered	Abdominal pain in infants, rashes (ringworms), common colds, infertility in women
4.	<i>Artemesia abyssinica</i> <a href="#">Sch.Bip. ex A.Rich</a>	ASTERACEAE	No name	WK/02/15/024	Leaves	Boil leaves	Heavy bleeding during periods (menorrhagia)
						Pound leaves and administer to chicken	Diarrhoea in chicken, cows
5.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	ASPARAGACEAE	<i>Chepsabeiyat</i>	WK/02/15/014	Roots	Boiled	Arthritis, infertility in women, cancer
6.	<i>Basella alba</i> L.	BASELLACEAE	<i>Ndaramiat</i>	WK/02/15/042	Roots, leaves	Boiled	Abdominal/colic pain in infants(“Surunda”), anaemia (increases blood count)
7.	<i>Carissa edulis</i> (Forsk.) Vahl	APOCYNACEAE	<i>Legetetyot, Tamuryakyat,</i>	WK/02/15/001	Roots	Boiled	Abdominal pains, infertility in women
8.	<i>Cascabela thevetia</i> (L.) Lippold	APOCYNACEAE	<i>Chepyalildet</i>	WK/02/15/029	Latex	Apply latex to wound	Wounds
9.	<i>Clematis simensis</i> Fresen	RANUNCULACEAE	<i>Sesyat /N’gososyat (Tugen)</i>	WK/02/15/002	Leaves and flowers	Pressed, or dried and ground to powder and inhaled	Sinusitis, allergy, common colds, cough, wheezing, chest pain, blocked nose, (goroitab ngwony)
10.	<i>Combretum collinum</i> Fresen	COMBRETACEAE	<i>Buukwet</i>	WK/02/15/039	Bark	Boiled	Infertility in women
11.	<i>Commiphora africana</i> (A.Rich.) Engl.	BURSELACEAE	<i>Chepkilgong</i>	WK/02/15/005	Bark, fruits	Boiled	Abdominal pains, renal disease
12.	<i>Croton macrostachyus</i> Hochst ex Del.	EUPHORBIACEAE	<i>Tebeswet</i>	WK/02/15/007	Bark	Boiled	Respiratory disorders, common colds in children
13.	<i>Cucumis prophetarum</i> L.	CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Chepkeswot/ Chelulugu</i>	WK/02/15/040	Fruits	Boiled	Emetic (To induce vomiting in order to remove phlegm to treat malaria, infertility,
14.	<i>Dovyalis abyssinica</i> (A.Rich.) Warb.	FLACOURTIACEAE	<i>Kapchobiniot</i>	WK/02/15/014	Roots	Boiled	Chemurmugulel/Kipgaras it (splenomegally),arthritis, infertility in women
15.	<i>Engleromyces goetzei</i> P.Henn.	XYLARIACEAE	<i>Bobatabtegat</i>	WK/02/15/042	Whole plant	Boiled	Respiratory disorders
16.	<i>Ensete ventricosum</i> (Welw.) Cheesman	MUSACEAE	<i>Sassuryet</i>	WK/02/15/049	Roots	Boiled	Infertility in both men and women
17.	<i>Entada abyssinica</i> Steudel ex A. Rich.	FABACEAE	<i>Katutwet</i>	WK/02/15/012	Bark	Boiled	Infertility in women
18.	<i>Erythrina abyssinica</i> DC	FABACEAE	<i>Kakorwet</i>	WK/02/15/017	Bark	Crush and add water	Abdominal/colic pain in children, chickenpox & infertility in men
19.	<i>Euclea divinorum</i>	EBENACEAE	<i>Uswet</i>	WK/02/15/013	Roots	Chewed	Cathartic

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20.	<i>Flacourtia indica</i> (Burm.f.) Merr.	FLACOURTIACEAE	Tangururwet	WK/02/15/018	Leaves	Boiled	Measles
					Bark	Boiled	Chicken pox
21.	<i>Gardenia volkensii</i> K.Schum	RUBIACEAE	Kebulwet	WK/02/15/031	Bark	Added to warm water and administered	Emetic
22.	<i>Hypoestes verticillaris</i> (L.f.) Roem&Schult	ACANTHACEAE	Turkwot	WK/01/15/016	Leaves	Press and apply the sap on the wound	Wounds
23.	<i>Kalanchoe crenata</i> (Andrews) Haw.	CRASSULACEAE	Guserwet	WK/02/15/030	Leaves	Sap applied	Unhealed navel in children to prevent infections
						Burn leaves and massage inflamed area	Muscle sprain, myalgia (poultice)
24.	<i>Lagenaria abyssinica</i> (Hook.f) C.Jeffrey.	CUCURBITACEAE	Motondorwet	WK/02/15/047	Leaves	Burnt leaves (busaruk)	Coughs
25.	<i>Leucas calostachys</i> Oliv.	LAMIACEAE	Ngechebchat	WK/02/15/048	Leaves	Chewed	Common colds, coughs
26.	<i>Markhamia acuminata</i> K. Schum.	BIGNONIACEAE	Chepsigirwet	WK/02/15/034	Bark	Boiled	To prevent abdominal pains/ bleeding & oedema in pregnancy
27.	<i>Markhamia lutea</i> (Benth.) K. Schum.	BIGNONIACEAE	Mobet	WK/02/15/028	Roots	Boiled	Arthritis, Inflammation (swelling) of the skin, myalgia
28.	<i>Melia azedarach</i> L.	MELIACEAE	Mwarbaini	WK/02/15/032	Bark, leaves	Boiled	Abdominal pains, STDs
29.	<i>Momordica foetida</i> Schumach.	CUCURBITACEAE	Cheptenderet/ Mandereriat	WK/02/15/021	Leaves, Roots	Press and inhale	"Gorotab ngwony"(trigeminal neuralgia, sinusitis)
30.	<i>Ozoroa insignis</i> Delile	ANACARDIACEAE	Chepkiton'gyot	WK/02/15/003	Leaves	Sap applied on affected areas	Mumps
31.	<i>Periploca linearifolia</i> Dill & A. Rich	APOCYNACEAE	Sinendet	WK/02/15/026	Roots	Roots, mixed with milk	Infertility, abdominal/colic pains in women, ulcers
32.	<i>Plectranthus barbatus</i> Andr.	LAMIACEAE	Irokwet (Nandi), Moron'get (Kipsigis)	WK/02/15/023	The two topmost tender leaves	Crush and mix with water and administer	Abdominal/colic pain in infants
33.	<i>Plectranthus barbatus</i> var. <i>grandis</i> (L.H.Cramer) Lukhoba&A.J.Paton	LAMIACEAE	Irokwetab goik	WK/02/15/033	Tuber	Boil	To stop diarrhea and vomiting in infants
34.	<i>Pseudarthria hookeri</i> Wight&Arn.	FABACEAE	No name	WK/02/15/035	Roots	Boiled	Abdominal pains, diarrhoea
35.	<i>Pterolobium stellatum</i> (Forssk.) Brennan	FABACEAE	Kipkosgosit	WK/02/15/009	Roots	Boiled	Common colds, persistent cough (asthma), spleenomegally
36.	<i>Rhamnus prinoides</i> L'Hér.	RHAMNACEAE	Kosisityet	WK/02/15/052	Roots	Boiled	Spleenomegally, infertility, cancer
37.	<i>Rhoicissus tridentata</i> (L.f.) Wild & R.B. Drumm.	VITACEAE	Torotwet	WK/02/15/036	Tuber	Sap from tuber	Wounds
38.	<i>Senna didymobotrya</i> (Fresen.) Irwin &Barneby	FABACEAE	Senetwet	WK/02/15/004	Leaves	Boiled	Cathartic

39.	<i>Solanum aculeastrum</i> Dunal	SOLANACEAE	<i>Sigowet</i>	WK/02/15/037	Roots	Boiled	Pneumonia in both children and adults, liver disease
					Fruit	Cut & pressed	Talisman - Children bathed in concoction to prevent ill omen from people with bad eyes Ringworms
40.	<i>Solanum aculeatissimum</i> Jacq.	SOLANACEAE	<i>Labotwetab kimagetiet</i>	WK/02/15/020	Roots	Boiled	Asthma, persistent cough, common colds
41.	<i>Solanum mauritanium</i> Scop.	SOLANACEAE	<i>Labotwetab timin</i>	WK/02/15/027	Roots	Boiled	Pneumonia, persistent cough, asthma, malaria, spleenomegally
42.	<i>Solanum sessilistellatum</i> Bitter	SOLANACEAE	<i>Labotwet</i>	WK/02/15/010	Fruit	Sap applied to affected teeth or ringworms	Teeth, ringworms, rashes in children
43.	<i>Syzygium cordatum</i> Hochst.exC.Krauss	MYRTACEAE	<i>Lamaiywet</i>	WK/02/15/008	Bark	Boiled	Common colds, diarrhoea
44.	<i>Tithonia diversifolia</i> (Hemsl.) Gray	ASTERACEAE	No name	WK/02/15/025	Leaves	Burnt leaves massaged on affected area	Poultice -sprain
						Pound leaves and administer	Diarrhea in cows and chicken
45.	<i>Toddalia asiatica</i> (Linn.) Lam.	RUTACEAE	<i>Kipkombotyet (Nandi), Chepindorwet (Kipsigis)</i>	WK/02/15/022	Roots, leaves	Boiled	Abdominal pains, gynaecologic disorders including infertility, common colds (cough/colds), cancer, renal disorders
46.	<i>Tylosema fassoglensis</i> (Schweinf.) Torre & Hillc.	FABACEAE	<i>Cheptebesiet</i>	WK/02/15/041	Tuber	Boiled	Epilepsy, infertility in women, renal disease, cancer
47.	<i>Urtica massaica</i> Mildbr.	URTICACEAE	<i>Ziwot</i>	WK/02/15/046	Leaves	Boiled	Abdominal pains especially in infants
48.	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> Delile	ASTERACEAE	<i>Mororwet</i>	WK/02/15/019	Roots	Boiled	Abdominal pains in infants, in pregnancy, arthritis, meningitis, malaria, typhoid, epilepsy
49.	<i>Zanthoxylum gillettii</i> (De Wild.) P.G.Waterman	RUTACEAE	<i>Sagawaita</i>	WK/02/15/038	Bark	Boiled, Chewed	Colic pain, hepatomegally, severe inflammation (swelling) of the body, tongue
						Grind bark and combined with resin and inhale	Rx of anthrax
50.	<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i> Willd.	RHAMNACEAE	<i>Chemanambelio</i>	WK/02/15/006	Bark	Boiled	Abdominal pain
51.			<i>Kipchilgatwet (Nandi) /Nyalgatwet (Tugen)</i>	WK/02/15/050	Bark	Crush and add a little water	Abdominal pain & diarrhea in infants
52.			<i>Mborusiat</i>	WK/02/15/051	Bark	Chewed raw or dried	Common colds, cough

**Table 2:** Classification of Medicinal Plants

	Plant	Family	Number	%
1.	<i>Albizia gummifera</i> , <i>Entada abyssinica</i> , <i>Erythrina abyssinica</i> , <i>Pseudarthria hookeri</i> , <i>Pterolobium stellatum</i> , <i>Senna didymobotrya</i> , <i>Tylosema fassoglensis</i>	FABACEAE	7	14
2.	<i>Ajuga remota</i> , <i>Leucas calostachys</i> , <i>Plectranthus barbatus</i> , <i>Plectranthus barbatus var. grandis</i>	LAMIACEAE	4	8
3.	<i>Solanum aculeastrum</i> , <i>Solanum aculeatissimum</i> , <i>Solanum mauritanum</i> , <i>Solanum sessilistellatum</i>	SOLANACEAE	4	8
4.	<i>Carissa edulis</i> , <i>Cascabela thevetia</i> , <i>Periploca linearifolia</i>	APOCYNACEAE	3	6
5.	<i>Artemesia abyssinica</i> , <i>Tithonia diversifolia</i> , <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>	ASTERACEAE	3	6
6.	<i>Cucumis prophetarum</i> , <i>Lagenaria, abyssinica</i> , <i>Momordica foetida</i>	CUCURBITACEAE	3	6
7.	<i>Markhamia acuminata</i> , <i>Markhamia lutea</i>	BIGNONIACEAE	2	4
8.	<i>Dovyalis abyssinica</i> , <i>Flacourtia indica</i>	FLACOURTIACEAE	2	4
9.	<i>Rhamnus prinoides</i> , <i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	RHAMNACEAE	2	4
10.	<i>Toddalia asiatica</i> , <i>Zanthoxylum gillettii</i>	RUTACEAE	2	4
11.	<i>Hypoestes verticillaris</i>	ACANTHACEAE	1	2
12.	<i>Aloe kedongensis</i>	ALOACEAE	1	2
13.	<i>Ozoroa insignis</i>	ANACARDIACEAE	1	2
14.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	ASPARAGACEAE	1	2
15.	<i>Basella alba</i>	BASELLACEAE	1	2
16.	<i>Commiphora Africana</i>	BURSELACEAE	1	2
17.	<i>Combretum collinum</i>	COMBRETACEAE	1	2
18.	<i>Kalanchoe crenata</i>	CRASSULACEAE	1	2
19.	<i>Euclea divinorum</i>	EBENACEAE	1	2
20.	<i>Croton macrostachyus</i>	EUPHORBIACEAE	1	2
21.	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	MELIACEAE	1	2
22.	<i>Ensete ventricosum</i>	MUSACEAE	1	2
23.	<i>Syzygium cordatum</i>	MYRTACEAE	1	2
24.	<i>Clematis simensis</i>	RANUNCULACEAE	1	2
25.	<i>Gardenia volkensii</i>	RUBIACEAE	1	2
26.	<i>Urtica massaica</i>	URTICACEAE	1	2
27.	<i>Rhoicissus tridentate</i>	VITACEAE	1	2
28.	<i>Engleromyces goetzei</i>	XYLARIACEAE	1	2

The plants were used to treat 32 different medical conditions, with the conditions treated by the widest variety of plants being abdominal/colic pains whereby 15(13%) different medicinal plants were used; respiratory disorders 15(13%) and infertility 14(12%) respectively (**Table 3**). One plant, *Solanum aculeastrum* was used as talisman, to offer children protection from evil or harm. The most widely used plants were *Vernonia amygdalina* which is used for the treatment of 7(7%) medical conditions, *Toddalia asiatica* 6(6%), *Aloe kedongensis* 5(5%) and *Zanthoxylum gillettii* 5(5%) plants (**Table 4**). The plant families with the highest number of usage were *Fabaceae* 8(14%) plants, *Lamiaceae* 4(8%) and *Solanaceae* 4(8%) plants respectively (**Table 3**).

The medicinal preparations consisted of roots, leaves and bark which were prepared in different ways depending on the intended use just like their Marakwet cousins that we earlier reported (Gabriel Kigen et al., 2014; Kipkore et al., 2014).



**Table 3:** Conditions treated by the medicinal plants

	<b>Condition</b>	<b>No of plants used</b>	<b>%</b>
1.	Abdominal/colic pains	15	13
2.	Respiratory disorders	15	13
3.	Infertility	14	12
4.	Renal disorders	6	5
5.	Arthritis	6	5
6.	Cancer	6	5
7.	Gynecological disorders	5	4
8.	Splenomegally	5	4
9.	Diarrhoea	4	3
10.	Wounds	4	3
11.	Ring worms	3	3
12.	Skin conditions	3	3
13.	Ulcers	2	2
14.	Emetics	2	2
15.	Cathartic	2	2
16.	<i>“Goroitab ngwony”</i>	2	2
17.	Malaria	2	2
18.	Chicken pox	2	2
19.	Liver disease	2	2
20.	Epilepsy	2	2
21.	Poultice	2	2
22.	Typhoid	1	1
23.	Meningitis	1	1
24.	Dental disorders	1	1
25.	Measles	1	1
26.	Oral thrush	1	1
27.	Mumps	1	1
28.	Inflammation	1	1
29.	Sexually transmitted diseases	1	1
30.	Anaemia	1	1
31.	Anthrax	1	1
32.	Talisman	1	1
33.	Veterinary uses	2	2
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Table 4: Frequency of plant use

	Plant	Conditions treated (No.)	%
1.	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>	7	7
2.	<i>Toddalia asiatica</i>	6	6
3.	<i>Aloe kedongensis</i>	5	5
4.	<i>Zanthoxylum gillettii</i>	5	5
5.	<i>Solanum aculeastrum</i>	4	4
6.	<i>Tylosema fassoglensis</i>	4	4
7.	<i>Artemesia abbyssinica</i>	3	3
8.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	3	3
9.	<i>Dovyalis abyssinica</i>	3	3
10.	<i>Erythrina abbyssinica</i>	3	3
11.	<i>Markhamia lutea</i>	3	3
12.	<i>Periploca linearifolia</i>	3	3
13.	<i>Rhamnus prinoides</i>	3	3
14.	<i>Solanum mauritianum</i>	3	3
15.	<i>Solanum sessilistellatum</i>	3	3
16.	“Kipchilgatwet”	2	2
17.	<i>Ajuga remota</i>	2	2
18.	<i>Albizia gummifera</i>	2	2
19.	<i>Basella alba</i>	2	2
20.	<i>Carissa edulis</i>	2	2
21.	<i>Clematis simensis</i>	2	2
22.	<i>Commiphora Africana</i>	2	2
23.	<i>Cucumis prophetarum</i>	2	2
24.	<i>Flacourtia indica</i>	2	2
25.	<i>Kalanchoe crenata</i>	2	2
26.	<i>Markhamia acuminata</i>	2	2
27.	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	2	2
28.	<i>Pterolobium stellatum</i>	2	2
29.	<i>Syzygium cordatum</i>	2	2
30.	<i>Tithonia diversifolia</i>	2	2
31.	“Mborusiat”	1	1
32.	<i>Cascabela thevetia</i>	1	1
33.	<i>Combretum collinum</i>	1	1
34.	<i>Croton macrostachyus</i>	1	1
35.	<i>Engleromyces goetzei</i>	1	1
36.	<i>Ensete ventricosum</i>	1	1
37.	<i>Entada abyssinica</i>	1	1
38.	<i>Euclea divinorum</i>	1	1
39.	<i>Gardenia volkensii</i>	1	1
40.	<i>Hypoestes verticillaris</i>	1	1
41.	<i>Lagenaria abyssinica</i>	1	1
42.	<i>Leucas calostachys</i>	1	1
43.	<i>Momordica foetida</i>	1	1
44.	<i>Ozoroa insignis</i>	1	1
45.	<i>Plectranthus barbatus</i>	1	1
46.	<i>Plectranthus barbatus var. grandis</i>	1	1
47.	<i>Pseudarthria hookeri</i>	1	1
48.	<i>Rhoicissus tridentate</i>	1	1
49.	<i>Senna didymobotrya</i>	1	1
50.	<i>Solanum aculeatissimum</i>	1	1
51.	<i>Urtica massaica</i>	1	1
52.	<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	1	1



## Plant Use

The details of various medical conditions treated, plants used and treatment methods are outlined below:

### Abdominal/Colic Pains

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Carissa edulis* is used to treat abdominal pains. The bark of *Zanthoxylum gillettii* is chewed and boiled for the treatment of abdominal/colic pains. Other preparations include boiled bark of *Ziziphus mucronata*, boiled bark and fruits of *Commiphora Africana*, boiled bark and leaves of *Melia azedarach* and boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica*. Milk added to a concoction made from the boiled roots of *Periploca linearifolia* is used to treat abdominal/colic pains in women, whereas a preparation made from the boiled roots of *Aloe kedongensis* is administered to treat abdominal/colic pain in infants (“*Surunda*”). A little water added to the crushed two top leaves of *Plectranthus barbatus* or bark of “*Kipchilgatwet*” may also be used. Other preparations for the management of abdominal pains in infants include boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina*, boiled roots and leaves of *Basella alba*, and boiled leaves of *Urtica massaica*.

The leaves of *Ajuga remota* are pressed or crushed and added to a little water to treat abdominal pains in children. A tincture made from the bark of *Erythrina abyssinica* may also be used. It is peeled to the yellow part, crushed, a little water added and administered. The same preparation is used to treat chicken pox and infertility in men.

### Ulcers

The boiled bark of *Markhamia acuminata* is used to treat ulcers. Alternative treatment involves the addition of milk to a concoction made from the boiled roots of *Periploca linearifolia*.

### Diarrhoea

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Pseudarthria hookeri* is used to treat abdominal pains accompanied by diarrhoea. The boiled bark of *Syzygium cordatum* is used for the same purpose. Boiled tubers of *Plectranthus barbatus var. grandis* are used to treat diarrhoea and vomiting in infants, whereas the crushed bark of “*Kipchilgatwet*” added to a little water is used to treat diarrhoea, also in infants.

### Typhoid

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina* is used.

### Emetics

The boiled fruits of *Cucumis prophetarum* are used to induce vomiting. Alternatively, some little warm water is added to the crushed bark of *Gardenia volkensii* and administered.

### Cathartic

The roots of *Euclea divinorum* are used to induce purgation. They are gently warmed over an open flame and chewed, followed by a cup of strong tea. Boiled leaves of *Senna didymobotrya* are also used as cathartics. The concoction is drunk and immediately followed by a cup of strong tea.

### Respiratory Disorders

The whole of *Engleromyces goetzei*, a parasitic fungi living in Bamboo is boiled and administered to treat respiratory disorders. The pressed leaves and flowers of *Clematis simensis* are inhaled to treat sinusitis, allergy, common colds, cough, wheezing, chest pain and blocked nose. They may also be dried, ground to powder and inhaled. The raw or dried bark of “*Mborusiat*” and leaves of *Leucas calostachys* are chewed to treat common colds and coughs, whereas powder from the burnt leaves (“*Busaruk*”) are licked for the same purpose. The leaves of *Ajuga remota* are pressed or crushed and added to a little water to relieve coughs in children. The boiled roots of *Aloe kedongensis* as well as bark of *Croton macrostachyus* or *Syzygium cordatum* and boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica* may also be used. A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Pterolobium stellatum* is used to treat common colds and persistent coughing and wheezing (asthma). Boiled roots of a total of three *Solanum* species were also recorded for the treatment of respiratory disorders. *Solanum aculeatissimum* is used in treatment of common colds, persistent cough and asthma, *Solanum mauritianum* for persistent cough, asthma and pneumonia; whereas *Solanum aculeastrum* is used in the management of pneumonia in both children and adults.

Leaves and flowers of *Clematis simensis* are used to treat a condition described by herbalists as manifesting as intense headache and nasal congestion, which was described by the medical team to be trigeminal neuralgia, fibromyalgia or sinusitis. The leaves are pressed or dried, ground to powder and inhaled. The leaves and roots *Momordica foetida* are also pressed and inhaled for the treatment of the condition.

#### **Malaria**

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Solanum mauritianum* is used. The boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina* may also be used.

#### **Wounds**

The leaves of *Hypoestes verticillaris* are pressed and sap applied on the wound. The sap from the leaves of *Kalanchoe crenata* is also used for anti-infective properties. Alternatively, the latex from *Cascabela thevetia* may be used. It is especially applied on the unhealed navel in babies to prevent infections. The sap from tubers of *Rhoicissus tridentata* is also used to treat wounds, especially open wounds.

#### **Meningitis**

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina* is used.

#### **Dental Disorders**

Juice from *Solanum sessilistellatum* fruits is applied on the affected tooth.

#### **Chicken Pox**

The infected child is washed with a tincture made from the crushed bark of *Erythrina abyssinica*. A concoction made from the boiled bark of *Flacourtia indica* is also used.

#### **Measles**

A concoction made from the boiled leaves of *Flacourtia indica* is used.

#### **Oral Thrush**

A concoction from the boiled bark from *Albizia gummifera* bark is administered to treat oral thrush in children.

#### **Ring Worms**

The roots of *Aloe kedongensis* are boiled and administered. An alternative treatment involves the application of juice from the fruits of *Solanum aculeastrum* or *Solanum sessilistellatum* on the affected areas.

#### **Skin Conditions**

The boiled roots of *Aloe kedongensis* are used to treat rashes while juice from *Solanum sessilistellatum* fruits is used to treat rashes, especially in children. The boiled roots of *Markhamia lutea* are used to treat inflammation (swelling) of the skin and muscle pain (myalgia).

#### **Mumps**

The leaves of *Ozoroa insignis* are chewed and the sap applied on swollen areas applied on affected areas.

### **Inflammation**

The bark of *Zanthoxylum gillettii* is chewed and boiled for the treatment of severe inflammation (swelling) of the body and tongue.

### **Infertility**

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Cucumis prophetarum*, *Ensete ventricosum* or *Rhamnus prinoides* is used to treat infertility in both men and women, while tincture made from the crushed bark of *Erythrina abyssinica* is used to treat infertility in men. Milk added to boiled roots of *Periploca linearifolia* as well as boiled roots of *Aloe kedongensis* are used to treat infertility in women. A concoction from the boiled roots of *Asparagus racemosus* combined with those of *Carissa edulis*, *Dovyalis abyssinica* & boiled tubers of *Tylosema fassoglensis* may also be used. Other regimes include the boiled bark of *Combretum collinum* combined with that of *Entada abyssinica* & *Tylosema fassoglensis*. Boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica* may also be used.

### **Gynaecological Disorders**

Boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica* are used to treat gynaecologic disorders, including abdominal pains and infertility. A concoction made of boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina* is administered in pregnancy to maintain good health. The boiled bark of *Markhamia acuminata* is also used in pregnancy to prevent abdominal pains, bleeding and oedema. A little water is added to the crushed bark of *Albizia gummifera* and administered to treat post-partum bleeding. A concoction made from the boiled leaves of *Artemesia abyssinica* is used to treat heavy bleeding during periods (menorrhagia).

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Stds)**

The boiled bark and leaves of *Melia azedarach* are used to treat abdominal pain and STDs.

### **Splenomegally**

A preparation made from the boiled roots of either *Dovyalis abyssinica*, *Pterolobium stellatum*, *Rhamnus prinoides* or *Solanum mauritianum* is used to treat a condition the herbalists referred to as “*Chemurmugulel*” or *Kipgarasit*” which our medical team thought it was splenomegally.

### **Liver Disease**

A preparation made from the boiled roots of *Solanum aculeastrum* is used to treat liver disorders. The bark of *Zanthoxylum gillettii* is chewed and boiled for the treatment of an enlarged liver (hepatomegally).

### **Renal Disorders**

A concoction made from the boiled tubers of *Tylosema fassoglensis* combined with boiled roots of *Dovyalis abyssinica*, *Carissa edulis* and *Asparagus racemosus* is used to treat kidney disease. The boiled bark and fruits of *Commiphora Africana*, as well as boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica* may also be used.

### **Anaemia**

A preparation made from the boiled roots and leaves of *Basella alba* is administered to increase the blood count.

### **Epilepsy**

A concoction made from the boiled tubers of *Tylosema fassoglensis* is used. The boiled roots of *Vernonia amygdalina* may also be used.

### **Arthritis**

A concoction from the boiled roots of *Asparagus racemosus* combined with those of *Carissa edulis*, *Dovyalis abyssinica* & tubers of *Tylosema fassoglensis* is administered. The boiled roots of *Markhamia lutea* or *Vernonia amygdalina* may also be used.

### Cancer

A concoction made from the boiled roots of *Asparagus racemosus* combined with those of *Carissa edulis*, *Dovyalis abyssinica* & tubers of *Tylosema fassoglensis* is administered. The boiled roots of *Rhamnus prinoides*, as well as boiled roots and leaves of *Toddalia asiatica* may also be used.

### Anthrax

Ground bark and resin of *Zanthoxylum gillettii* is inhaled.

### Poultice

The leaves of *Kalanchoe crenata* are burnt and the remains are massaged on inflamed/inflamed area to treat muscle pains sprains and related disorders. The burnt leaves of *Tithonia diversifolia* may also be used.

### Talisman

A preparation made from the boiled roots of *Solanum aculeastrum* is used as talisman, mainly to offer children protection from ill omen. The child is bathed in the concoction to prevent evil or harm caused by people with “bad eyes” (Kipkorir BE et al., 2008; Kipkore et al., 2014).

### Veterinary Uses

The pound leaves of *Artemesia abyssinica* combined with those of *Tithonia diversifolia* are used to treat diarrhoea in chicken and cows.

## Discussion

Herbal medicine is still widely used in Tindiret just like many other rural communities in Kenya. All the herbalists we interviewed had learnt the art from a close relative by word of mouth, mostly parents or grandparents but none of them had documented the plants, even those who had obtained some basic education. In fact, quite a number of herbalists knew the plants only by appearance, but had forgotten the names. We had to rely a lot on the herbalist who accompanied us to identify the local names, sometimes consulting other people who were not even herbalists. This is a worrying trend in Kenya since there is risk of knowledge disappearing due to lack of documentation (Kigen GK et al., 2013). Indeed, we identified three plants (*Artemesia abyssinica*, *Pseudarthria hookeri* & *Tithonia diversifolia*) that none of the herbalists could recall the local names.

Some of the herbalists we interviewed tended to have specific specializations. The areas we identified include gynaecological disorders, infertility, epilepsy and children’s diseases (paediatrics). We identified most of the conditions treated by herbalists but there were two conditions which were not very clear “*Goroitab ngwony*” and “*Chemurmugulel/Kipgarasit*”. “*Goroitab ngwony*” is a condition that was described as presenting with severe headache, blocked nose and sometimes associated with the loss of teeth. From the description, our medical team thought that it was probably trigeminal neuralgia, fibromyalgia or sinusitis. “*Chemurmugulel/Kipgarasit*” was described as presenting with enlargement of in the left upper quadrant of the human abdomen. Our medical team arrived at the conclusion that it was splenomegaly which may have been caused by several factors including infectious diseases or malignancy. Like their other Kalenjin counterparts, emesis is used to treat what they regard to be “*malaria*” (Kipkore et al., 2014). We found out that the herbalists thought it is malaria because it presents with nausea and vomiting, sometimes accompanied by low grade fever. The emesis is therefore expected to remove massive build-up of mucus in stomach and chest to throat (phlegm) which may presumably cause pneumonia and therefore accompanying fever, as well as bile which they associate with malaria. The herbs used for this purpose are fruits of *Cucumis prophetarum* and bark *Gardenia volkensii*.

A number of the documented herbal plants have been investigated and found to possess some pharmacological activities similar to those mentioned by the herbalists. These include antitumour effects of *Toddalia asiatica* and *Asparagus racemosus* (Mitra et al., 2012; Vazquez et al., 2012; Praveena et al., 2014; Thangavelu et al., 2015), antibiotic activities of *Cascabela thevetia*, *Kalanchoe crenata* and *Melia azedarach* (Khan et al., 2001; Akinsulire et al., 2007; Khan et al., 2008; Sowjanya et al., 2013), antibiotic and antifungal effects of *Solanum aculeastrum* (Koduru et al., 2006; Steenkamp et al., 2007) and control of anaemia by *Basella alba* (Bamidele et al., 2010).

### Conclusion

The study documents important ethno-medical knowledge on the plants used by herbalists in Tindiret sub-county. Most of the medicinal plants from the various Kenyan communities have not been documented despite the risk of disappearance of the knowledge on

traditional medicine. There is therefore need to document these indigenous uses of plants for research and potential development of new drugs.

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