



HERBAL MEDICINE

## Treating COVID-19 Without Drugs: Will It Become a Global Standard of Care?

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With reports suggesting at least 90 percent of COVID-19 patients in China may be treated with herbal remedies, and the Association of Korean Medicine recently releasing clinical guidelines for COVID-19 treatment utilizing TCM (see Drs. Choi and Suh's two-part translation with commentary in the August and September issue), the value of medicinal plants in helping mitigate COVID-19 symptoms is gaining steam.

That trend continues with the announcement that the World Health Organization and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have initiated a joint effort to "enhance research and development of traditional medicines for COVID-19 in Africa."

The WHO and Africa CDC have established a 25-member Regional Expert Committee on Traditional Medicine for COVID-19 that, according to a press release from the WHO, "will support countries in collaborative efforts to conduct clinical trials of traditional medicines in compliance with international standards."



In its press release, the WHO acknowledged both the benefits of traditional, complementary and alternative medicine; and the African continent's rich history of traditional medicine use and traditional medicine practitioners.

The expert committee is in the process of creating a master protocol that will guide countries on clinical trials investigating traditional medicine as a treatment for COVID-19, as well as establishing an agenda to support member states.

"As the world races to find treatment and vaccines against the virus, research into traditional and orthodox medicines as potential COVID-19 therapy must be grounded in science, and today marks an important step in supporting these endeavours," said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa."

OCTOBER 2020