

Traditional medicine



TRADITIONAL MEDICINE Before the era of modern science people used to treat themselves by traditional medicines. Traditional medicine comprises unscientific knowledge system that developed over generations within various societies. Traditional medicine includes herbal medicine, unani medicine, ayurvedic medicine etc. In 1974, the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a new policy. WHO tried to encourage developing countries to develop their own traditional forms of medicine, instead of turning to Western medicine for expensive cures to medical problems. There were many people who looked down on this new policy, but WHO felt it was the most reasonable solution to the large health problems facing poor countries.

Today, WHO estimates that a third of global population lack easy access to modern drugs, and that in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia, that figure rises to fifty percent. WHO believed that the people in developing countries who could not afford or find modern medical doctors were better off using traditional medicine rather than no medicine at all. Today, traditional medicine and treatments are not only used in developing countries, but are increasing in popularity in North America and Europe. In the United Kingdom, for example, us\$230 million is spent on traditional remedies annually. In China, traditional herbal medicines account for thirty to fifty percent of all medicines used. The global market for traditional medicines is estimated to be \$60 billion, and growing every year. Twenty-five percent of modern medicines are made from plants that were first used in traditional medicine, and scientists believe they have just scratched the surface. For example, one Chinese herbal remedy, which has been used for two thousand years, has

recently been found to be effective against varieties of malaria that have resistance to other drugs.

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