Abstract

Many studies have been carried out on the nutritive value of indigenous leafy vegetables but few have been done on the medicinal value of these traditional vegetables. A study was carried out to document the medicinal and immunoboosting value of indigenous leafy vegetables (ILVs) used traditionally by vulnerable groups (children, pregnant mothers, people living with HIV/AIDS) in Kenya. Descriptive data were collected from a total of 65 respondents. Using open-ended questionnaire, ethno medicinal surveys were carried out from November to December 2016 in Kakamega and Kilifi counties in Kenya. A total of 14 ILV species were described. Of these, 12 were reported by the respondents to boost body immunity across the vulnerable groups; 11 species were reported to treat various conditions across the groups. There was a general consensus of use of ILV species as therapeutic and immunoboosters across the three groups. A cross cultural analysis found that six ILV species were used in both counties of Kakamega and Kilifi. These were Amaranthus dubius, Cleome gynandra, Corchorus olitorius, Cucurbita maxima, Solanum villosum und Vigna unguiculata. The study forms a basis for development of value added products in standardized formulations containing ILVs to address the documented or other related human health challenges.