

Large numbers of people, mostly in developing countries, rely on traditional medicines for their primary healthcare needs. This paper focuses on conservation of medicinal plants used for skin infections, one of the most common sources of health problems in Kenya. An ethnobotanical study was carried out in the Makueni district of southern Kenya to explore the utilization and conservation of medicinal plants used for skin infections and to determine whether levels of harvesting are sustainable. Data were collected through open-ended semi-structured questionnaires. Consensus, as a quantitative criterion, was used in recording field information. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was used in determining the community's conservation, plant use and healthcare needs. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The research revealed that 34 plant species from 31 genera and 22 families were of ethnomedical interest in treating at least eight different skin infections. The study showed that seven plant species have become scarce due to over-exploitation. Successful propagation was, however, noted at some home gardens of individual herbal practitioners. It was concluded that there is a need for concerted efforts for conservation, as no single sector, private or public, can undertake the conservation of medicinal plants alone.