



## REVIEW OF PLANTS USED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FIBROIDS IN SOME SUB-SHARAN AFRICA COUNTRIES

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### ABSTRACT

**Context:** Medicinal plants represent a promising alternative for the treatment of Uterine fibroids due to their low cost, increasing evidence of therapeutic efficacy and relatively limited side effects. **Objective:** to identify plants traditionally used for the management of uterine fibroids in Sub-Saharan **Methods:** Literature searches were conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate and PubMed. Africa. **Results:** among the most frequently cited species were *Ageratum conyzoides* and *Momordica foetida*. The most represented families were Fabaceae and Asteraceae. **Conclusion:** The findings contribute to knowledge harmonization and lay the groundwork for future studies on the antimyomatous potential of medicinal plants in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Keywords:** medicinal plants, Sub-Saharan Africa, fibroid

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### INTRODUCTION

Medicinal plants have been used for centuries in the prevention and treatment of various diseases, mainly due to their secondary metabolites with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antitumor properties. Between 1981 and 2010, about 41% of new drugs and 80% of anticancer agents were derived from natural products, underlining their importance in modern therapeutics (Islam *et al.*, 2014).

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In Africa, nearly 80% of the population relies on traditional medicine, particularly plant-based remedies, because of their accessibility, affordability and relative safety (Laboratory of Drug Development, University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso *et al.*, 2021). Well-studied species include *Euphorbia hirta* (antioxidant), *Momordica charantia* (antibacterial), *Aspilia africana* (anti-inflammatory) and *Curcuma longa* (antimycomatous), illustrating the pharmacological diversity of African flora and its potential relevance for uterine fibroid management (Sharma *et al.*, 2014; Singh *et al.*, sans date). Uterine fibroids are benign smooth muscle tumors of the uterus that affect a large proportion of women of reproductive age. Although often asymptomatic, they can cause heavy bleeding, pelvic pain, infertility and adverse pregnancy outcomes (Lou *et al.*, 2023) (Day Baird *et al.*, 2003).

The Global Burden of Disease study estimated that 226.05 million women were living with fibroids in 2019, with an increasing trend since 1990 (Lou *et al.*, 2023). Cohort studies based on ultrasonography report a cumulative incidence of about 70% in women overall and over 80% in women of African descent (Day Baird *et al.*, 2003). A systematic review confirmed this high burden and indicated that prevalence varies according to diagnostic methods and study populations, with women of African ancestry consistently at higher risk (Stewart *et al.*, 2017). In sub-Saharan Africa, a scoping review reported highly heterogeneous prevalence rates across countries and age groups, reflecting both the substantial disease burden and disparities in access to ultrasound screening (Morhason-Bello et Adebamowo, 2022). For instance, a hospital-based study in Cameroon found a prevalence of 16.8% among pregnant women, underscoring the significance of fibroids in this setting (Egbe *et al.*, 2018).

Current management includes myomectomy, hysterectomy, uterine artery embolization and medical therapies. While effective, these approaches are often associated with recurrence, adverse effects, high cost, or irreversible infertility, which limit their applicability in low- and middle-income countries ((Nantinda *et al.*, 2025). These constraints highlight the need for safe, affordable and culturally acceptable alternatives. Ethnobotanical studies have documented the use of numerous medicinal plants for fibroid management in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly species with antiproliferative, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory activities (Adebisi, 2019, (Nantinda *et al.*, 2025) Families such as Fabaceae, Asteraceae, Annonaceae and Lamiaceae are frequently reported, with leaves most often used, typically as decoctions (*Organisation Ouest Africaine de la Santé*, 2013).

However, existing studies remain fragmented and lack comprehensive integration of ethnobotanical and pharmacological data. The present review therefore aimed to identify medicinal plants traditionally employed against uterine fibroids in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Nigeria and to synthesize pharmacological evidence supporting their use.

By consolidating current knowledge, this work seeks to provide a scientific basis for future investigations and to promote the valorisation of African plant resources with potential antimycomatous properties, This is to provide resources that can accompany conventional treatments to make them more bearable and cheaper.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A bibliographic search was conducted from August to September 2024, which was the period dedicated to data collection. The research was

conducted using specialized search engines to identify ethnobotanical surveys reporting plants traditionally used in the management of uterine fibroids in sub-Saharan Africa, because of the high prevalence of fibroids in tropical Africa (Day Baird *et al.*, 2003). To optimize data retrieval, different keyword combinations were applied, including *plants + medicinal + fibroids* and *phytotherapy + fibroids + sub-Saharan Africa*, with appropriate synonyms. Retrieved articles were screened and only those meeting the following criteria were retained: (i) written in English and/or French; (ii) conducted in sub-Saharan African countries; and (iii) providing explicit information on plant species, plant parts used, preparation methods and routes of administration. Studies not meeting these criteria, ethnobotanical survey journals and articles written in other languages were excluded (Tow *et al.*, 2021).

**Ethnobotanical data** The plants used in the treatment of fibroids are numerous, in this list there is only those used in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Nigeria and presenting enough data for their preparations to be reproducible, thus the Table 1 (appendix) presents the plants used in the treatment of fibroids in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **Data analysis**

In view of the results obtained, there is different families of plants used to treat fibroids, Fabaceae, Asteraceae, Annonaceae, Lamiaceae, Curcubitaceae Euphorbiaceae, Lamiaceae, Arecaceae are the most used families with respectively

## **DISCUSSION**

Medicinal plants, whose therapeutic properties are well documented, play a central role in the management of gynaecological conditions within African communities, where they serve as a first-line, accessible form of care rooted in local knowledge. This review highlights several species that exhibit antitumor, antiproliferative, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities relevant to the management of uterine fibroids. The collected data including safety information, signals of symptomatic efficacy and pharmacological evidence of mechanisms of action support the relevance of using these traditional preparations, notably as herbal teas, in community practice. The aim is not to replace conventional treatments, but to harness this plant potential to develop improved preparations that could strengthen existing care. These results therefore provide a solid basis for the promotion and reasoned integration of plant-based products into the therapeutic arsenal, subject to rigorous oversight to ensure quality and safety.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

The authors of this study declare that they have no conflict of interest.

#### **DECLARATION OF HONOR**

We declare on our honour that our research is not fake and make up.

#### **AI ASSISTANCE DISCLOSURE**

The authors used [ChatGPT/GPT-5] to improve the clarity and readability of the manuscript. The authors carefully reviewed and edited the content to ensure accuracy and take full responsibility for the final text.

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## APPENDIX

**Table I:** plants used in the treatment of fibroids.

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Acanthaceae	<i>Acanthus montanus</i>	Leafy stem	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)
Amaryllidaceae	<i>Allium ascalonicum</i>	Tuber	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
Anacardiaceae	<i>Antrocaryon klaineianum</i>	Bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Lannea acida</i>	Stem bark, roots	Decoction	(Coulidiaty <i>et al.</i> , 2021)
Annonaceae	<i>Cleistopholis patens</i>	Bark	Decoction	(Adomou <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
	<i>Enantia chlorantha</i>	Stem bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Uvaria chamae</i>	Bark	Macération in water for 3 days + decanting	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Xylopia aethiopica</i>	Seed/pod	Cutting into pieces + maceration in water for 3 days	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Apocynaceae	<i>Baijsea axillaris</i>	Pod	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Mondia whitei</i>	Fruits	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
Arecaceae	<i>Cocos nucifera Linn</i>	Root	Cutting into pieces + maceration in water for 3 days	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>	Seed	Ingestion	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Acmella caulirhiza</i>	leafy plants	Pounding + mixing with palm oil/alcohol, divided into 2 doses	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
	<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L.	Young plants	Grinding + mixing with palm kernel oil	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Aspilia Africana</i> (Pers)	Leaf	Ingestion	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Conyza floribunda</i> kunth	1 handful of leaves	Grinding into powder + rock salt + water, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Galinsoga ciliata</i> (Raf). Blake	1 handful of leafy stems	Grinding into powder + rock salt + water, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
Bignoniaceae	<i>Kigelia africana</i> (lam)	Bark	Maceration of fermented corn water + salt	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
	<i>Kigelia africana</i>	Bark	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Newbouldia laevis</i> (P. Beauv.) Seeman Bureau	Leaves	Maceration of fermented corn water + salt	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Spathodea campanulata</i>	1 handful of leaves	Decoction with a leaf of <i>Triumfetta cordifolia</i> in water	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Heliotropium indicum</i>	Bark	Cutting into pieces + decoction in water	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Calophyllaceae	<i>Mammea africana</i>	250 mg stem bark	Infusion in hot water	(Noumi, 2010)
Caricaceae	<i>Carica papaya</i>	Leaf	Infusion	(Noumi, 2010)
Chenopodiaceae	<i>Trona</i>	Pod	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
Clusiaceae	<i>Mammea Africana</i>	Stem bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)
Combretaceae	<i>Pteleopsis hylo dendron</i>	Stem bark	Maceration in water or local alcohol	(Noumi, 2010)
Commelinaceae	<i>Palisota hirsuta</i>	Bark	Cutting into pieces + decoction in water	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Convolvulaceae	<i>Ipomoea involucrata</i>	Handful of leaves	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)
Cucurbitaceae	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Fruits	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Cucumis metuliferus</i>	Fruit	Decoction	(Adomou <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
	<i>Momordica charantia L</i>	Leafy stem	Infusion	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Momordica foetida foetida</i> Schum & Thonn	2 m of leafy stem	Infusion in hot water	(Noumi, 2010)
Dichapetalaceae	<i>Dichapetalum gabonense</i> Engl.	Root	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Dioscoreaceae	<i>Dioscorea reflexa</i> Hook F.	Seed	Crushing + maceration in local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Croton oligandrum</i> Pierre.	50 mg stem bark	Maceration in water or local alcohol	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i> L.	Stem bark	Crushed and rolled into a ball	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Jatropha curcas</i> Linn.	Bark	Cutting + pounding + sieving + taking with local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Macaranga barteri</i>	Leaves	Maceration with local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Fruits	Maceration of fermented corn water + salt	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Fabaceae	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i>	Leaves	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Cylicodiscus gabunensis</i>	50 mg stem bark	Macération dans l'eau ou alcool local	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Desmodium velutinum</i>	Leaves	Maceration in water for 3 days + decanting	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Guibourtia tessmannii</i>	Bark	Mix with rock salt powder + water, shape into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Piptadeniastrum africanum</i>	Stem bark	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Senna alata</i>	Leaves	Cutting + pounding + sieving + taking with local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Tetrapleura tetraptera</i>	Pod	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
	<i>Cassia sieberiana</i>	Stem bark, roots	Powder mixed in cold water	(Coulidiaty <i>et al.</i> , 2021)
	<i>Erythrophleum guineense</i>	Stem bark	Infusion	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Tetrapleura tetraptera</i> Taub	Stem bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)
Lamiaceae	<i>Clerodendrum volubile</i>	young plants	Pounding + mixing with palm oil/alcohol, divided into 2 doses	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Mentha piperita</i>	Leafy plant	Mixed in alcoholature (odontol)	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Ocimum americanum</i>	leafy stems	Pounding + mixing with palm oil, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
	<i>Ocimum americanum L.</i>	leaves	Pounding + mixing with palm oil, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
	<i>Solenostemon monostachyus</i>	Leaves	Grinding + mixing with palm kernel oil	(Noumi, 2010)
Lauraceae	<i>Persea americana</i>	Stem bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)
Liliaceae	<i>Aloe spp.</i>	leaves	Maceration in odontol	(Noumi, 2010)
Malvaceae	<i>Cola acuminata</i>	stem bark	Decoction with a leaf of <i>Triumfetta cordifolia</i> in water	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
	<i>Sida pilosa</i>	Leaves	Grinding + decoction in local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Triumfetta cordifolia</i>	leaves	Used to infuse decoction water	(Noumi, 2010)
Marantaceae	<i>Haumania danckelmaniana</i>	leaves	Pounding + mixing with palm oil, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
Melastomataceae	<i>Dissotis rotundifolia (Sm.)</i>	leafy stem	Mixed with rock salt and rolled into a ball	(Noumi, 2010)
Meliaceae	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	bark, leaf, root	Decoction	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Trichilia emetica</i>	stem bark, roots	Powder mixed in cold water	(Coulidiaty <i>et al.</i> , 2021)
	<i>Musa nana</i>	fruits	Cutting + pounding + sieving + taking with local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
Olacaceae	<i>Olox subscorpioidea</i>	Bark	Cutting into pieces + decoction in water	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Ongokea gore</i>	stem bark	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Pandaceae	<i>Microdesmis puberula</i>	Root	Decoction with fermented aloescorn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
Piperaceae	<i>Piper guineense Schumach.</i>	Fruits	Decoction with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Piper umbellatum</i>	Leaves	Steaming under hot, pressed ashes	(Noumi, 2010)
Pluteaceae (Fungi)	<i>Volvariella esculenta</i>	bark	Boiling with fermented corn water	(Adebisi, 2019)
Polygalaceae	<i>Securidaca longepedunculata Fers</i>	stem bark, roots	Decoction	(Coulidiaty <i>et al.</i> , 2021)
	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	leafy stems	Pounding + mixing with palm oil, shaping into balls	(Noumi, 2010)
Rubiaceae	<i>Hallea stipulosa</i>	stem bark	Maceration in water or local alcohol	(Noumi, 2010)
Rutaceae	<i>Araliopsis soyauxii.</i>	stem bark	Maceration in water or local alcohol	(Noumi, 2010)
Sapindaceae	<i>Blighia sapida</i>	Bark	Maceration in local alcohol for 3 days	(Adebisi, 2019)
Sapotaceae	<i>Baillonella toxisperma</i>	Stem bark	Decoction	(Noumi, 2010)

Botanical Family	Name of the Plant	Used Part	Preparation Method	Reference
Solanaceae	<i>Solanum aethiopicum</i>	Bark	Cutting + pounding + sieving + taking with local alcohol	(Adebisi, 2019)
	<i>Solanum lycopersicum L.</i>	Leaves	Decoction in water	(Noumi, 2010)
Vitaceae	<i>Cissus petiolate</i> Hook.	Leafy stem	Maceration	(Noumi, 2010)
Zingiberaceae	<i>Aframomum melegueta K. Schum</i>	Fruit	Maceration in water or local alcohol	(Noumi, 2010)