

Monitoring health misinformation in Nigeria:

**A collection of potentially harmful
claims from May to July 2020**



This study was conducted by a group of researchers from the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos as part of a health misinformation fact-checking project in Nigeria. It contains a collection of potentially false and harmful health claims that circulated in the public domain during the May to July 2020 period. It is the third in a series of quarterly reports that will be shared with the network of journalists, fact-checkers, health experts and policymakers to increase the uptake of evidence-based health information in Nigeria. The project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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INTRODUCTION

Misinformation can be described as information that is false, but which the disseminator believes to be factual (Amobi, Obia, Udodi, & Akinuliola, 2019). This includes false claims surrounding health issues, shared ignorantly by people who believe them to be true and without the intention to harm the consumer.

Even though the intent of the creator or purveyor of the misinformation might not be to cause outright harm, health misinformation has potentially damaging implications for the health of the population. Kim (2019) argues that widespread health misinformation is a cause for alarm, as it has the possibility to create public health crises. In agreement, Zielinski (2020) notes that in Nigeria, it is undermining medical advice, proffering fake cures, and inciting panic.

A prime example from Nigeria is contained in a video which although has been taken down by Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, is still circulating on WhatsApp. This video contains the unsubstantiated claim by Dr. Stella Immanuel, a Nigerian trained General Practitioner in the U.S. that she has treated over 350 patients of COVID-19 with a combination of Hydroxychloroquine, Zinc and Zithromax (Moshood, 2020). Although, the Nigerian Guild of Medical Directors and Clinical Pharmacists Association of Nigeria have challenged her claim as lacking in scientific evidence (Folorunsho-Francis, 2020), the video continues to be shared among several groups on the WhatsApp platform.







Health misinformation in Nigeria ranges from rumours, such as claims that bathing with salt water will cure Ebola, to ethnically based beliefs and superstitions, such as the claim among the Igbos of Southeast Nigeria that palm oil poured on a red-hot knife can disinfect and cure a cut or nail puncture on the feet, to misperceptions about causes of diseases and illnesses, their modes of transmission and treatment, and the herbal concoctions which can treat them. Social media gives people without medical backgrounds and self-proclaimed “herbal” doctors the ability to disseminate health misinformation to a wide range of people, and exacerbates the risks posed by it.




The biggest challenge is that misinformation drowns official public health advice, making it difficult for the voices of healthcare professionals to be heard. The fallout can be dangerous, and can range from a patient suffering unnecessarily and protractedly from a treatable condition, to outbreaks of an entirely preventable disease (Kaltwasser, 2019). There is a dire need for rapid verifications of claims and awareness among consumers about the nature and dangerous implications of health misinformation.

This research sought to identify the prevalent examples of health misinformation in Nigeria, what motivated their creation and the potential harm to the consumers of such messages. It covers the circulation of false health claims for the period May to July 2020 and was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the prevalent examples of health misinformation in Nigeria?
2. What are the sources and channels of dissemination of health misinformation in Nigeria?
3. What are the motives behind the formulation and spread of health misinformation in Nigeria?
4. What are the potential harms of health misinformation in Nigeria?

COMMUNITY BELIEFS

Brief description of claim	Origin/Platform circulated on	Motivation for dissemination	Potential harm
<p>It is claimed that Neem leaves (<i>Dogonyaro</i>), Guava leaves, Pawpaw leaves, Lemongrass, Mango leaves and Lime leaves, can be used to prevent and cure COVID-19. To process: Put leaves in water and bring to boil for about 30 minutes. Remove from heat, cover yourself with a blanket while leaning towards the pot to inhale the steam from the liquid. Do this for about 15 minutes.</p>  <p>Neem leaves</p>  <p>Guava leaves</p>  <p>Pawpaw leaves</p>  <p>Lemongrass</p>  <p>Mango leaves</p>  <p>Lime leaves</p>	<p>This belief is increasingly becoming popular among some Nigerians. It is largely circulated via interpersonal networks and private social media platforms, such as WhatsApp.</p>	<p>The uncertainty, fear and desperation resulting from the unavailability of a preventive vaccine or highly effective therapeutics for COVID-19, may be driving the claim.</p>	<p>Reliance on this remedy may result in people not seeking prompt medical help when they are infected with the Coronavirus, thus placing their lives at risk.</p>

<p>It is claimed that Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>) popularly known as <i>Ila</i> amongst the Yorubas, helps force out babies during childbirth.</p>  <p>Okra</p>	<p>This belief is common among the Yoruba community in Southwest Nigeria. It is circulated by traditional health practitioners and other interpersonal networks, such as family and friends. It is believed by the Yorubas to be an effective assistance for easy child birth amongst pregnant women.</p>	<p>To perhaps provide a traditional method for hastening the labor and delivery process.</p>	<p>This claim could misinform pregnant women as the claim has not been scientifically proven.</p>
<p>It is claimed that Ragleaf or Okinawa Spinach, also <i>Gynura crepidioides</i> (<i>Efo Ebolo</i> in Yoruba) helps in the treatment of heart diseases. To process: the vegetable is soaked in water to extract the juice, which is then taken for two weeks.</p>  <p>Ragleaf</p>	<p>This belief is common among the Yoruba community in Southwest Nigeria. It is circulated by traditional health practitioners and other interpersonal networks, such as family and friends.</p>	<p>To provide traditional medicine for treating heart diseases, and promote local alternative herbal remedies.</p>	<p>Belief in this claim may negatively drive health seeking behaviors, as individuals confronted with heart diseases may be tempted to adopt this herbal remedy, as opposed to seeking treatment from medical experts.</p>
<p>It is claimed that adding lime juice to a hot drink called Schnapps is an effective remedy against dizziness.</p>  <p>Lime Juice</p>	<p>This is a common belief among the Yoruba community in Southwest Nigeria. It is circulated by traditional health practitioners and other interpersonal networks, such as family and friends.</p>	<p>To provide traditional medicine for treating dizziness.</p>	<p>Since this claim is not subjected to any scientific laboratory testing, its potential risks and side effects for the consumer are unknown. It may also prevent people from seeking medical treatment for dizziness from experts, thus placing their lives at risk.</p>



A series of claims were made about Yoruba community beliefs. Some of them include the claims that when a pregnant woman walks under the sun, she will give birth to a disfigured child; that beating a male child with a broom will render him impotent, and that drinking of coconut water will make a person 'dull'.



Coconut Water






These claims are held as cultural community beliefs amongst the Yorubas. They were culled from an article about Yoruba beliefs which was [published on NG Pulse](#)

These claims are all related to cultural beliefs that have formed over many generations. The motivation for the media platform to publish it, was most likely to inform or provide interesting reading about traditional health beliefs and practices among the Yorubas.

Although there are no serious harms associated with some of the claims, they could lead to not seeking proper medical care, or cultivate false beliefs that prevent optimal health. For example, the disfigured child claim could prevent women from getting some of the benefits from the sun, like vitamin D; the potency claim could mislead men into attributing their impotency to having been beaten with a broom in the past and prevent them from seeking medical help; while the coconut water claim could wrongly attribute and prevent people from seeking appropriate care for children with developmental problems.

SOCIAL MEDIA HEALTH MISINFORMATION CLAIMS

FACEBOOK

Brief description of claim	Source/Platform circulated on	Motivation for dissemination	Potential Harm
<p>It is claimed that Wormwood or <i>Artemisia Absinthium</i>, (called <i>Ewe Egbin</i> in Yoruba), Guava leaf (<i>Psidium guajava</i>), Paw-paw leaves with Ginger, Turmeric and Garlic, Coconut oil, all available in Nigeria, can be taken to cure COVID-19.</p>  <p>Wormwood</p>  <p>Guava plant</p>  <p>Ginger</p>  <p>Pawpaw</p>  <p>Turmeric (<i>ata Ile pupa</i> in Yoruba)</p>	<p>These claims were posted on Facebook.</p> <p>They also circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>Possibly to promote Nigerian plants and remedies, and provide 'natural' preventive measures against COVID-19.</p>	<p>Believing the claim might lead people to ignore the safety measures prescribed by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and medical experts.</p>

It is also claimed that three leaves of Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus Labillardiere*) boiled for two minutes, aids in the cleaning of the lungs. Similarly, inhaling a pinch of *Aboniki* balm added to a cup of boiled water clears the lungs, thus preventing COVID-19.



Eucalyptus leaves



Aboniki balm

It is claimed that tea made from Guava leaves helps hair growth, cures stomachache, coughs and bronchitis, and aids with weight loss through suppressing appetite.




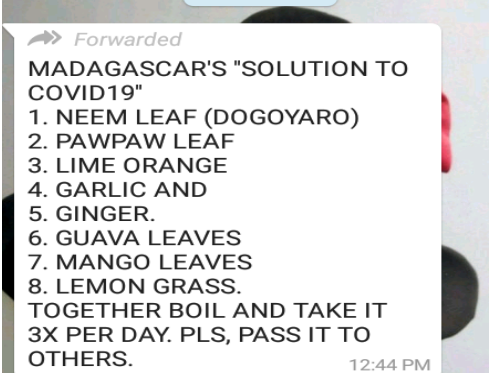
Guava leaves

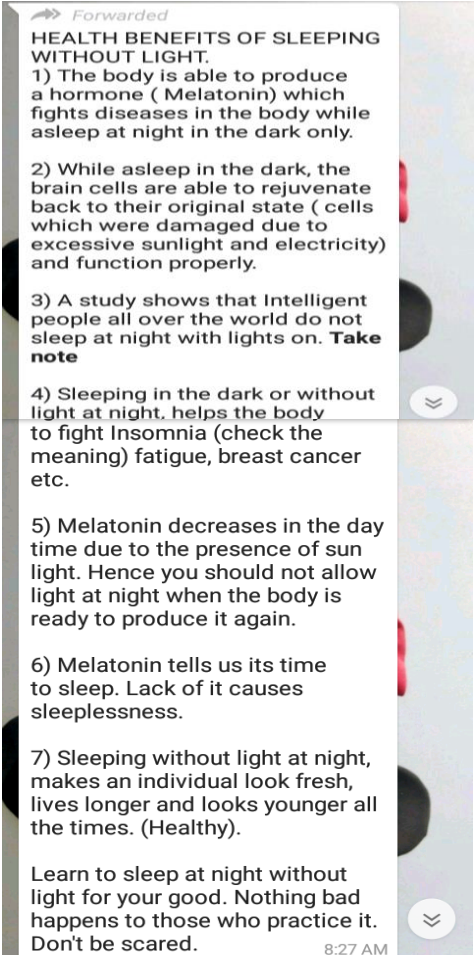
This claim was posted on [Facebook](#)

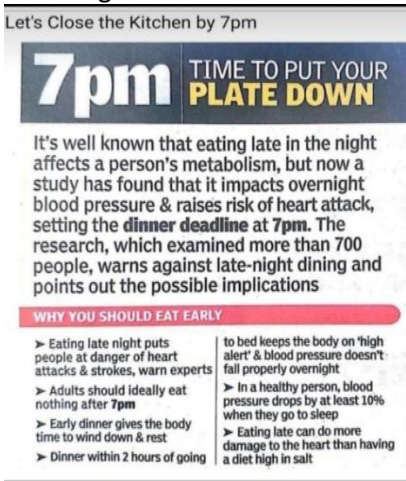

To perhaps inform the public on the health benefits of guava leaf tea.

This might drive people to depend solely on guava leaf tea to treat stomachache, coughs and bronchitis, instead of seeking prompt medical care.


WHATSAPP




Brief description of claim	Source/Platform circulated on	Motivation for dissemination	Potential Harm
<p>It is claimed that Scent leaf or <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> (<i>Efinrin</i> in Yoruba, <i>Nchanwu</i> in Igbo, and <i>Daidoya</i> in Hausa) has the following health benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cures coughs • Solves indigestion • Prevents heart disease • Lowers sugar levels • Relieves pains, fever and respiratory issues • Repels mosquitoes  <p>Scent Leaves</p>	<p>This claim was circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>Possibly to provide organic remedies for the listed sicknesses.</p>	<p>Scholars and fact-checkers advise that information from social media groups should be viewed with scepticism and should be verified as they often lack scientific evidence. It may therefore be dangerous to accept such health information as this may lead to consumers' sole dependence on the plant, and refusal to seek help from medical experts when necessary. This could lead to health complications.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the juice from boiled Neem leaves or <i>Azadirachta Indica</i> (popularly known as <i>Dongoyaro</i> in many parts of Nigeria), Pawpaw leaves, Lime, Orange, Garlic, Ginger, Guava Leaves, Mango leaves, lemongrass or Cymbopogan, (Kooko Oba in Yoruba), taken three times per day is Madagascar's solution to COVID-19. Image below:</p> 	<p>This claim was widely circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>The lack of a tested vaccine or orthodox drugs presenting a definitive cure, especially for vulnerable COVID-19 patients, such as the elderly, those with underlying conditions, or patients with severe symptoms, appears to be driving the rapid development and spread of herbal remedies, as well as speculations and conspiracies.</p>	<p>This claim is not evidence based and may mislead readers into adopting the remedy without seeking proper medical attention, which could lead to serious health complications.</p>




<p>It is claimed that COVID-19 is not a virus, but a bacterium and it is amplified with 5G electromagnetic radiations that also produces inflammation and hypoxia, and can therefore be cured with antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and anticoagulants. Furthermore, it is claimed that Italy used 100mg Aspirin, and Apranax to combat COVID-19 and it proved effective.</p>	<p>This was a claim in video format that circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>Researchers do not have enough evidence on the motivations behind conspiracy theories during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the uncertain context is driving many conspirac</p>	<p>Consumers of the message may be tempted to try out antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, as well as the indicated drugs instead of seeking medical attention if infected by COVID-19.</p>
<p>It is claimed that sleeping in the dark enables the body to produce a hormone called Melatonin which fights diseases. See image below:</p>  <p>HEALTH BENEFITS OF SLEEPING WITHOUT LIGHT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The body is able to produce a hormone (Melatonin) which fights diseases in the body while asleep at night in the dark only. 2) While asleep in the dark, the brain cells are able to rejuvenate back to their original state (cells which were damaged due to excessive sunlight and electricity) and function properly. 3) A study shows that Intelligent people all over the world do not sleep at night with lights on. Take note 4) Sleeping in the dark or without light at night, helps the body to fight Insomnia (check the meaning) fatigue, breast cancer etc. 5) Melatonin decreases in the day time due to the presence of sun light. Hence you should not allow light at night when the body is ready to produce it again. 6) Melatonin tells us its time to sleep. Lack of it causes sleeplessness. 7) Sleeping without light at night, makes an individual look fresh, lives longer and looks younger all the times. (Healthy). <p>Learn to sleep at night without light for your good. Nothing bad happens to those who practice it. Don't be scared.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8:27 AM</p>	<p>This claim was circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>The intention behind the WhatsApp is possibly harmless, and seems to promote better sleep hygiene.</p>	<p>People who prefer sleeping with the lights on for psychological reasons, may change the habit, and this may affect them negatively.</p>
<p>It is claimed that a group of Japanese doctors have confirmed that warm water is 100% effective in resolving: high blood pressure, migraines, low blood pressure, joint pains, sudden increase and decrease of heartbeat, epilepsy, high cholesterol levels, coughs, bodily pains, and asthma, amongst others.</p>	<p>This claim circulated on WhatsApp.</p> <p>It was also published on Bgnyan, an online website.</p>	<p>This claim may have been driven by the desire to encourage the regular intake of water, and may not have a direct intent to cause harm.</p>	<p>Although water in itself is not harmful to the body, claiming that water is effective in resolving the listed diseases is misleading and may prevent people from seeking necessary medical attention.</p>


<p>It is claimed that experts have warned that eating late at night puts people at the danger of heart attacks and strokes. See image below:</p>  <p>Let's Close the Kitchen by 7pm</p> <p>7pm TIME TO PUT YOUR PLATE DOWN</p> <p>It's well known that eating late in the night affects a person's metabolism, but now a study has found that it impacts overnight blood pressure & raises risk of heart attack, setting the dinner deadline at 7pm. The research, which examined more than 700 people, warns against late-night dining and points out the possible implications</p> <p>WHY YOU SHOULD EAT EARLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Eating late night puts people at danger of heart attacks & strokes, warn experts > Adults should ideally eat nothing after 7pm > Early dinner gives the body time to wind down & rest > Dinner within 2 hours of going to bed keeps the body on 'high alert' & blood pressure doesn't fall properly overnight. > In a healthy person, blood pressure drops by at least 10% when they go to sleep > Eating late can do more damage to the heart than having a diet high in salt 	<p>This claim was circulated on WhatsApp.</p> <p>This claim was also posted on Facebook.</p>	<p>To sensitize the public, perhaps genuinely, on the dangers of eating late at night, or there could be commercial gains.</p>	<p>This claim may cause fear of eating late at night in people's minds and may lead them to abstain from food, even when necessary. In general, it also feeds a culture where old wives tales are presented as fact.</p>
<p>It is claimed in a video that Ginger offers innumerate health benefits because it contains over 115 highly beneficial chemical ingredients, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves heart health • Powerful anti-inflammatory agent • Prevents heart diseases 	<p>This claim was made in a video which circulated on WhatsApp, and went viral on YouTube.</p>	<p>The widespread belief in the efficacy of ginger may have motivated the claim.</p>	<p>It might encourage people not to seek prompt medical attention where and when necessary, and instead focus on ginger for the listed ailments.</p>

INSTAGRAM


Brief description of claim	Source/Platform circulated on	Motivation for dissemination	Potential Harm
<p>It is claimed that African Walnut or <i>Tetracarpidium conophorum</i> (<i>Okhue</i> in Edo, <i>Asala</i> in Yoruba, <i>Ukpa</i> in Igbo, and <i>Kaso</i> in Cameroon) prevents cancer, helps weight loss and cleanses the digestive system.</p>  <p><i>African Walnut</i></p>	<p>This claim was posted by an Instagram user with the handle @askdamz available at this link.</p>	<p>To perhaps provide the health benefits of <i>African Walnut</i> and also gain more followers on Instagram.</p>	<p>It might lead people to rely solely on walnuts to cure the listed ailments rather than seeking appropriate and prompt medical care.</p>




<p>It is claimed that Lime and Chia Water is great for a gentle daily detox that helps shed weight, improves skin, and has abundance of vitamins and minerals. See image below:</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @_beautyremedies at this link.</p>	<p>To provide a natural remedies for daily detoxing and to perhaps gain more followers on Instagram.</p>	<p>No scientific evidence was provided to back up the claim. The authenticity is therefore questionable.</p>
<p>It is claimed that a certain capsule known as Maca pills can be used for booty and boobs enlargement. See image below:</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page: @sexualden here.</p>	<p>To popularise, promote and boost sales of a quack product and attract more followers.</p>	<p>The claim appears not to be evidence based and it is unclear how safe the capsules are when consumed. This is more so when it has not been approved by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the appropriate drug control agency in Nigeria.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the remedy called Fertileboost below is used in treating unexplained infertility in women.</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @fertileboost at this link.</p>	<p>To promote and boost sales of the herbs.</p>	<p>The claim is not backed up by any scientific research or evidence, and the safety of this remedy is unclear. It may put the lives of users at risk.</p>




<p>It is claimed that the remedy shown below can be used to flush and unblock the tubes in females. See image below:</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @fertileboost – see this link.</p>	<p>To promote and boost sales of the herbs.</p>	<p>The claim is not backed up by any scientific research or evidence. Women may rely on the drug, when they have for more serious symptoms that require science-based medical treatment.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the herbal concoction called Fertileboost can be used for all menstrual issues, as well as early menopause. See image below:</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @fertileboost – see this link.</p>	<p>To promote and boost sales of the herbal concoction.</p>	<p>It is unclear if the product has been endorsed by NAFDAC. Also, individuals suffering from serious menstrual issues may depend solely on the herbal remedy, when they could have a life-threatening underlying medical condition.</p>
<p>It is claimed that a cup of warm water and fresh grape juice taken on an empty stomach from cycle day 1 to cycle day 10 helps in producing cervical mucus, and this helps lubricate the floor of the womb for the sperm cells to easily swim to and fertilise the egg.</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @fertilecorner_hq at this link.</p>	<p>To provide a natural remedy for infertility and perhaps increase the page’s follower base, which has commercial value.</p>	<p>Such information may lead to consumers’ dependence on the remedy for curing infertility, and may deter them from seeking orthodox medical attention, when needed.</p>


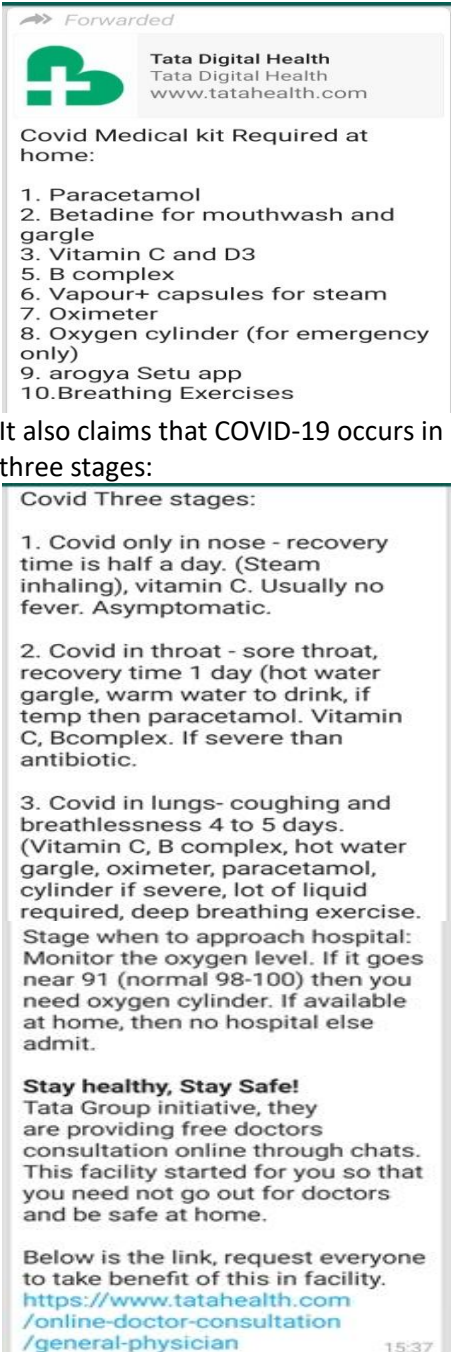
<p>It is claimed that one leaf of Ceylon Cinnamon or <i>Cinnamomum verum</i> (<i>Oloorun</i> in Yoruba), five bay leaves or <i>Bay Bunkum</i> (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>), five Guava leaves or <i>Psidium guajava</i>, boiled in three cups of water for five to ten minutes acts as daily fertility boosters.</p> 	<p>This claim was posted on the Instagram page @fertilecorner_hq at this link.</p>	<p>To provide a natural remedy to boost fertility and increase the page's follower base, which has commercial value.</p>	<p>Such information may lead to consumers' dependence on the remedy for curing infertility, and may deter them from seeking orthodox medical attention, when necessary.</p>
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WEBSITES




Brief description of claim	Source/Platform circulated on	Motivation for dissemination	Potential Harm
<p>It is claimed that the following leaves can cure diabetes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitter Leaf (<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> known as <i>Ewuro</i> in Yoruba) • Scent Leaf or <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> (<i>Efirin</i> in Yoruba, <i>Nchanwu</i> in Igbo) • Mango Leaf • Aak Plant or <i>Calotropis gigantean</i>) 	<p>The claim was written by Fadaka Louis and published on Gbetu TV at this link.</p>	<p>To provide traditional alternatives for the treatment of diabetics and to promote the Nigerian traditional health sector, as well as drive traffic to the website.</p>	<p>It might encourage people to ignore more appropriate medical attention and focus instead on the plant-based remedy.</p>
<p>It is claimed that Cove leaf assists in the fight against diabetes, lowers high blood pressure, aids weight loss.</p>	<p>This claim was posted on Opera news at this link.</p>	<p>To drive traffic to the blog and perhaps provide readers with</p>	<p>This claim might drive people to depend solely on the local remedy to treat</p>

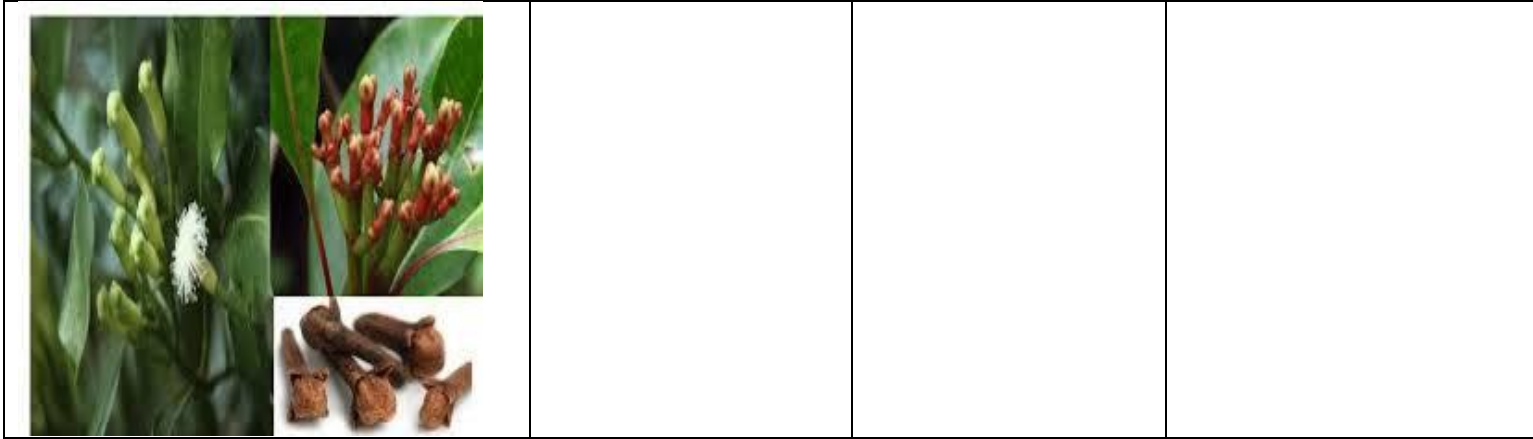
<p>See image below:</p> <p>See The Traditional Leaf That Treats Diabetes And Causes Weight Loss</p> <p>opera.com 2d</p> 		<p>the traditional health benefits of cove leaf.</p>	<p>the ailments listed instead of seeking prompt medical attention when necessary. This might lead to health complications.</p>
<p>It is claimed that avocado pear prevents and combats cancer, aids great vision, prevents osteoporosis and other chronic diseases, and helps to reduce bad breath.</p> 	<p>This claim was published on Pulse.ng.</p>	<p>To perhaps sensitize the public on the health benefits of avocado pear and to drive traffic to the website.</p>	<p>Individuals with any of the listed ailments may depend solely on the traditional remedy instead of seeking medical attention. This may lead to serious health complications.</p>
<p>It is claimed that Pawpaw seeds aid treatment of cancer, ulcers, infections, etc. It is also claimed that scented oil extract, rich in amino acids from pawpaw seeds is potent in the treatment of sickle cell disease and related disorders.</p>  <p>Pawpaw Seeds</p>	<p>This claim was posted on the website called Opera News App.</p>	<p>To possibly drive traffic to the website and perhaps educate readers on the health benefits of pawpaw seeds.</p>	<p>This claim might drive people to depend solely on the pawpaw seeds as treatment for the ailments listed instead of seeking prompt medical attention when necessary. This might lead to health complications.</p>

<p>It is claimed that <i>Aloe vera</i>, <i>Honey</i>, <i>Garlic</i>, <i>Flavonoids</i> and <i>Bananas</i>, can be used as remedies for stress and Ulcers.</p> 	<p>This claim was published on Pulse.ng.</p>	<p>To possibly drive traffic to the website and provide natural remedies for treating stress and ulcers.</p>	<p>This claim might drive people to depend solely on the remedy to treat the ailments listed instead of seeking prompt medical attention which might lead to health complications.</p>
<p>It is claimed that <i>Okra</i> or <i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i> (<i>Ila</i> in Yoruba, <i>Okwulu</i> in Igbo) can treat Asthma, Diabetes and Kidney diseases.</p> 	<p>This claim was published on Opera news's website.</p>	<p>To provide traditional alternatives for the treatment of the listed diseases and to promote traffic to the site.</p>	<p>This claim may mislead people into having misguided trust in Okra and lead to them to refuse seeking the attention of medical experts for serious conditions such as diabetes or kidney diseases.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the following benefits can be derived from taking a blend of <i>Soursop</i> (<i>Annona muricata</i> a specie of the genus <i>Annona</i> of the custard apple tree family) and <i>Guava</i> (<i>Psidium guajava</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents kidney problems • Cures insomnia • Cures catarrh and coughs • Aids digestion • Prevents diabetes 	<p>This claim was published on Opera News's website</p>	<p>To drive traffic to the blog, and provide organic remedies for the listed illnesses.</p>	<p>This claim may mislead people into having misguided trust in the fruits and prevent them from seeking proper medical attention.</p>

			
<p>It is claimed that the following is a COVID-19 medical kit required at home:</p>  <p>It also claims that COVID-19 occurs in three stages:</p>	<p>This claim circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>To promote the services of the Tata health site, using COVID-19 as the pull.</p>	<p>Believing the claim might lead people to ignore the preventive measures prescribed by medical experts and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Some of the medications in the “kit” may be harmful when taken in excess. For example, a paracetamol overdose could lead to liver failure, thus, without any dosage directions, this could be the case. Infected persons may also resort to home care instead of expert medical care. Furthermore, the link at the end of the claim, takes the reader to the TATA home page and not the article referred to in the claim. Consumers may rely solely on the WhatsApp version and may not be tech savvy enough to click and verify the claim on the TATA website.</p>
<p>It is reported that Rev. Fr. Raymond Arazu claimed that the Anambra Traditional Medical Board has developed</p>	<p>This claim was published on this website. It also</p>	<p>To possibly promote a “local” cure for COVID-19, especially as there is still no vaccine or</p>	<p>It may lead individuals to trust the supposed remedy and ignore NCDC’s recommended safety</p>

<p>a cure for the Covid-19 virus using indigenous ingredients.</p>	<p>circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>highly efficacious therapeutic drug or as clickbait driving traffic to the site.</p>	<p>measures. This might place their lives in grave danger.</p>
<p>It is claimed that Okra or <i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i> (<i>Okwulu</i> in Igbo, <i>Ila</i> in Yoruba) stabilizes blood sugar and prevents and improves constipation amongst others. See image below:</p>  <p>The Amazing Health Benefits Of Okra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize blood sugar • Prevent and improve constipation • Helps lubricate the large intestines due to its bulk laxative qualities • Used for healing ulcers and to keep joints limber • Neutralize acids • Treats lung inflammation • Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory • Prevent diabetes • Protects you from pimples and maintains smooth and beautiful skin • Okra juice is used to treat sore throat associated with coughing • Decoction of okra leaves, fruits and leaves are used to treat urinary problems • Okra juice used to treat diarrhea with fever and related abdominal pains • Okra seeds are used to treat and prevent muscle spasms • Decoction of okra is used to treat fever, headache and arthritis 	<p>This claim was published on The Montserrat Reporter's website. It also circulated on WhatsApp.</p>	<p>The belief that Okra is medicinal might have motivated this claim, as well as the desire to increase traffic to the website.</p>	<p>It might encourage people not to seek prompt medical attention and instead focus on Okra as a treatment for the listed ailments.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the oil from mint leaves (<i>Mentha</i> a genus of plants in the family of <i>Lamiaceae</i> (<i>Ewe Minti</i> in Yoruba) contains antioxidant and anti-inflammatory components which can help in relieving seasonal allergies.</p> 	<p>This claim was published on the Nigerian Finder website.</p>	<p>To perhaps sensitize readers about the health benefits of Mint leaf, and drive traffic to the website.</p>	<p>It might lead people to rely solely on Mint leaf rather than getting appropriate medical care when necessary.</p>
<p>It is claimed that unripe pawpaw soaked in water for four days can be used to cure ulcers and haemorrhoids.</p>	<p>This claim was published on a Nairaland chat forum.</p>	<p>The motivation might be traffic to the chat forum, or it's simply an ill-informed remedy that some people do believe in.</p>	<p>This claim does not include any medical evidence and lacks scientific merit. Hence, it is capable of misleading and placing users at risk by preventing them from seeking actual treatment for haemorrhoids. The further</p>

			<p>discussions on the forum highlights more unscientific examples of how pawpaw cures serious conditions.</p>
<p>It is claimed that the mixture of banana, raw honey and tomatoes increases sexual well-being and moisturizes the skin, among others.</p>  	<p>This claim was published on the Nairaland forum.</p>	<p>This may have been motivated by the desire to promote natural fruits and extracts, as well as drive traffic to the website. An excerpt from the claim reads: “We have Raw Original Honey straight from the Bee farm”. This suggests that the claim is also motivated by the desire to create awareness and promote the sale of their honey.</p>	<p>This is not evidence based and therefore cannot be authenticated.</p>
<p>It is claimed that cloves or <i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>, (<i>Kanafuru</i> in Yoruba, <i>Osasagbogbo</i> in Igbo, <i>Kanumfari</i> in Hausa) strengthens the immune system, reduces inflammation, aids digestion, boosts testosterone levels, has anti-viral, anti-microbial, and antibacterial properties amongst other health benefits.</p>	<p>This claim was published on Punch Online.</p>	<p>To inform readers on the health benefits of cloves and perhaps increase traffic on the website.</p>	<p>Although the writer supported some of the claims with some studies, s/he failed to provide the sources. Thus, the authenticity of the claim is unclear. The claim may drive individuals to depend solely on cloves instead of seeking medical attention and this might put their health at risk.</p>



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