

MICROBIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF SOME GHANAIAN HERBAL  
PREPARATIONS - SAFETY ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS  
FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS.

By

Joseph a. Ampofo, Anthonia Andoh Wihermina Tetteh, Mohammed Bello

**Abstract**

Thirty-one herbal preparations produced and sold on the Ghanaian market were randomly purchased from sales outlets and analyzed for their microbiological quality by testing for the presence of total coliform bacteria, faecal coliform bacteria, and total heterotrophic bacteria count. Also tested for was detection of pathogenic bacteria such as the *Salmonella* spp., *Enterococcus* spp. and *Clostridium* spp. Opportunistic bacterial pathogens (*Aeromonas* spp., *Enterococcus* spp. and *Pseudomonas* spp.) and mould were also tested for. The herbal preparations tested came from different processing companies and included those labeled as suitable for treating arthritis, asthma, anaemia, diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, cough, hypertension, dysmenorrhoea, malaria, urine retention and loss of appetite. Aliquots of the various herbal products were cultured on various selective media. Eight (8) of the products showed the presence of all microorganism analyzed for including the pathogenic ones and are recommended not be used. Five (5) of the products did not have any microorganism present. Eleven (11) products showed the presence of only total heterotrophic bacteria and the values ranged from 1 to 94 cfu per ml. These two groups of total of sixteen (16) products can be used without any microbiological risk. Another three (3) products showed presence of only total heterotrophic bacteria but the values ranged from 118 to 1648 cfu per ml. Majority of the herbal preparations showed the presence of pathogenic bacteria. These three products may pose danger to the user can be used with caution. None of the herbal products recorded the presence of *Enterococcus* spp.