

**TRADITIONAL HEALING MODALITIES IN THE PROVISION OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN
VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, **NYADZANI DOLPHUS NEVHUDOLI**, hereby declare that the dissertation for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution and that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signed:.....Date.....

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all the traditional healers for their dedication in healing mentally ill patients.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to explore the use of traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province. Traditional medicine has been used for thousands of years by indigenous people in South Africa and Africa as a whole, and demonstrated efficacy in treating a wide range of health issue. Many of the medicines in contemporary biomedical treatment are derived from plants and herbs used by indigenous people throughout the world. The objectives of the study were to describe the profile of the clients that visit the traditional healers, to explain traditional healers' diagnostic strategies of mental illness, to explain the traditional healing treatment modalities in the treatment of various forms of mental illness and to discuss traditional healers' prevention methods of mental illness. The study was guided by indigenous theory of health and illness as a theoretical framework, and for supporting the literature, a theory of African perspective theory was used. A qualitative research approach was used in order to have an in-depth understanding of the modalities of traditional healing in the provision of mental health care. Case study approach was used. Participants were selected purposively around Vhembe district in Limpopo province and snowball sampling technique was applied in order to identify and recruit relevant participants. The researcher conducted semi -structured interviews to gather the relevant data. Data analysis was based on the interpretative philosophy that aimed at examining meaning and symbolic content of qualitative data. Thematic analysis method was employed. The findings of the study confirmed that traditional healing is still widely used in the communities in the provision of mental illness and that there are a variety of diagnostic, treatment and prevention methods in the provision of mental illness. The findings also show that as much as there are challenges facing traditional healing in treatment of mental illness, there is a need to introduce their modalities in the healthcare system of South Africa, Africa and the whole world. Programs that aim to educate the communities about traditional healing modalities should also be established by the Department of Health and the relevant stakeholders such as traditional healers' organizations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIHR - Canadian Institute of Health Research

CIDI- Composite International Diagnostic Interview

DSM- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder

HCP - Health Care Practitioner

NDOH -National Department of Health

NAHO - National Aboriginal Health Organization

NGO - Non- Governmental Organization

TM - Traditional Medicine

TAAM - Team in Aboriginal Antidiabetic Medicines

WM - Western Medicine

WHO - World Health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Traditional medicine, also known as indigenous or folk medicine, comprises knowledge system that was developed over generations within various societies before the era of modern medicine. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicines as 'the sum total of the skills and practices based on the theories, whether explicable indigenous to different cultures or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental issues.

At the turn of the 21st century, traditional healing was viewed as a practice used by poverty- stricken communities and quacks, however, the rejection of synthetic or biomedical products has become a growing trend in African society in treating a mental ill person. When less developed countries are taken into account, it is estimated that over 50% of population relies on traditional medicine practices in treating the mental problems, especially in Africa and part of South America. While the prevalence of traditional medicine and western medicine in relation to mental issue problems in certain areas of the world will vary based on the cultural norms, much of today's African medicine is based on the plants that have been used in the past. Some researchers point out a significant factor that many alternative treatment of mental illness depends on the cultural norms and values of communities (Kubukeli, 1999:34). In recent years, researchers have begun to examine the chemistry of plants used by contemporary healers and elders to treat various illnesses. Their projects have confirmed that traditional medicines exhibit chemical properties that can effectively and safely treat illnesses. Researchers have also tested the safety of traditional medicines when used in combination with biomedical based treatment (Kubukeli, 1999:54).

In the Indian population, resources for patients often are scarce, especially in rural areas. Traditional healing has a long history in India and is still widely used, including for mental illness. However, its use has rarely been studied systematically. The influences of traditional healing are very important in the types of interventions that are done by traditional healers, but this does not satisfy many people's sense of comprehensive treatment. As was apparent in the study done in India, many Gujaratis also value the contributions of traditional caretakers and medication. Preference for doctors or traditional healers may be related to the outcomes of the care received. Subjects who did not experience western healing for mental illness seemed more likely to believe in traditional healing, possibly adopting the general attitude of their

community. Those who received traditional healing but had not remission of symptoms tended to express disdain for the healer and predilection to seek medical treatment (Schoonover, 2014: 20).

Throughout the world, there is an increasing awareness of traditional healing of mental health problems. Several studies have shown that knowledge of public attitude to mental illness and its treatment is a virtually important prerequisite to the realization of successful community based programs. The recognition of mental disorder also depends on a careful evaluation of the norms, beliefs and customs within the individual cultural environment. Furthermore, in Nigeria, community attitude and beliefs have played a role in determining help, seeking behaviour and successful treatment of the mentally ill. Unarguably, ignorance and stigma prevent the mentally ill from seeking appropriate help. People tend to have strong beliefs about the mentally ill and many of these concepts which are basis of such beliefs must be taken into consideration. People's beliefs regarding mental illness should not only be studied within a cultural context, although the knowledge and perception of mentally illness patients and their relatives has been reported in southwest of Nigeria, to date, there is little research done on the perceptions of traditional healing towards mentally illness from northern Nigeria, a culturally distinct part of the country, it is said in the study that there is no sufficient consideration of traditional healing in mental illness (*ibid*:25).

Mental illness is among the most common conditions affecting health today, both in developed and developing countries. World Organization(WHO) figures indicate that mental and behavioral disorders are likely to affect at least 25% of the general adult population at one time and at least 25% of all people at some times in their lives.

In South Africa, there are few population level insights into the use of traditional healing and other forms of alternative care for the treatment of common mental disorders in Sub -Sahara Africa. A national survey was conducted with 3651 adults in South Africa between 2002 and 2004 using the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI) to generate diagnoses. A minority of participants with a lifetime DSM-IV diagnosis obtained treatment from western (29%) or alternative (20%) practitioners. Traditional healers were consulted by 9% of the respondents and 11% consulted a religious or spiritual advisor. Use of traditional healers in full sample was preferred by the older age, black race, unemployed, low educated and those having anxiety. Alternative practitioners, including traditional healers and religious advisors appear to play an important role in the delivery of mental health care in South Africa. Traditional healing plays an important role in primary health care in many developing countries. There were approximately 200 000 traditional healers in South Africa in 1995, it is estimated that 70% to 80% of

the population in Africa makes use of traditional healing. It is also said that in South Africa, most people visit or consult a traditional healer before going to a primary health care practitioner (Setswe, 1999:15).

Vhembe district which is found in the Limpopo province is characterized by some communities which are found in deep rural areas, this makes it very difficult for an individual or a patient to consult western practices or go to clinics, and instead, they go to traditional healers for different sickness including mental illness. One of the reasons for consulting traditional healers is that the availability of traditional healers in communities is very high, in most cases, every village around the district has at least two or more traditional healers who can be accessed easily around the community and the fact that consultation in a traditional healer can be free depending on the type of sickness. This makes it very easy for individuals to consult traditional healers. As indicated that Vhembe district comprises less developed communities, the belief in traditional healing is very high, all these lead people to the preference of traditional healing and the study of exploration into the use of traditional healing in the provision of mental care in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province becomes more relevant.

The study explored the use of traditional healing modalities employed in the provision of mental health in Vhembe district, Limpopo province. This chapter covers the following: background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, rationale of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, expected outcomes, definition of key concepts and theoretical framework.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Traditional healing seems to contribute a lot to the community in dealing with a variety of illness including mental illness. Its modalities have not been fully exposed to the society and different stakeholders in order to know and understand how traditional healing works. Traditional healing was considered as one of the most profound healing method in Africa, particularly in dealing with the kind of illness such as mental illness. Recently, it seems as if traditional healing is not recognized when it comes to mental illness. The reason may be that people are no longer exposed to traditional healing.

The problem of mental illness around the communities appears to increase more frequently and is more likely to get worse as time goes, and it seems as if there is no accurate treatment of mental illness, given that not much attention is given to the matter around Vhembe district in Limpopo province. Therefore, exploration of the use of traditional healing in the provision of mental health care in the Vhembe District of Limpopo province is envisaged to shed more insight of the studied phenomena which is traditional

healing in the provision of mental illness. Some people argue that it is better to adopt traditional healing to treat mentally ill patients whereas others are of the view that modern medicines are more effective in addressing the challenge of mental illness. In most communities, the problem still remains the same regarding how traditional healers understand and treat mentally ill patients.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to have an in depth analysis of traditional healing modalities in the treatment of mental illness.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To achieve the above mentioned aim of the study, the following objectives were adhered to:

- To describe the profile of the clients that visit traditional healers
- To describe the traditional healers' diagnostic strategies of mental illness
- To explain the modalities used by traditional healers in the treatment of various forms of mental illness
- To investigate the methods used by the traditional healers in the treatment of mental illness
- To investigate the prevention methods of mental illness

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions underpinning the study:

- What is the profile of the clients who visit traditional healers?
- What are the diagnostic strategies used by traditional healers?
- What are the modalities used by traditional healers in the treatment of various forms of mental illness?
- What are the methods used by traditional healers in the treatment of mental illness?
- What are the prevention methods of mental illness?

1.6 SIGNIFANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are likely to close the gap that was available between the traditional healing modalities and the issue of mental illness or disorders. The study is envisaged to behelpful to the policy makers, communities, traditional healers and medical health practitioners as detailed below:

1. 6.1 Policy Makers

The findings are likely to empower the Department of Health, policy and guidelines makers with the knowledge that in cases where the needs for the treatment of mental illness are great and the resources are inadequate, traditional healers can play an important role in improving the health and quality of life of the communities. The findings will enable policy and guideline makers to be aware of the value of including traditional healing within the mainstream of healing social and individual sicknesses such as mental illness.

1.6.2. Community members

Community members will benefit from the study because it provides insight that is likely to broaden their overall understanding of traditional healing. The study will enable the community to understand that traditional healing can treat a variety of social dilemmas ranging from social problem to major medical illnesses such as mental problems. Community members who are affected or effected by mental illness will have a clear understanding of how traditional healing can help the community in treating mental illnesses. The community will also benefit from the general knowledge about traditional healing in the provision of mental illness.

1.6. 3 Traditional healers

Traditional healers will know and be able to recognize different mental illnesses in the community, the study is envisaged to empower traditional healers to recognize different types of mental illnesses found in the community. The traditional healers will also benefit from first-hand information on how to provide for their mentally ill clients.

1.6.4 Medical health practitioners

The findings of the study will enable medical practitioners to put more value on the traditional healing in the treatment of mental health illness, treatment programs, and public health policies aimed at addressing traditional healing in the provision of mental health care.

The findings of the study are also envisaged to be useful as references for other researchers who will be researching on the studied phenomena (a qualitative exploration into the use of traditional healing in the provision of mental health care in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province).

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Participants in the study comprised traditional healers from Vhembe district, in Limpopo province, South Africa. The researcher identified participants who had the same characteristics. All the participants were old people whose ages ranged from 50 - 80 years, they were all illiterate meaning that they were not trained at school for their practice, and again, all the participants understood traditional healing and mental illness and they had knowledge and experience on the topic being researched.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Below are the definitions of key terms used in the study:

African Traditional medicine

African traditional medicine refers to a sum total of knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of physical and mental illnesses (Helwig, 2005:14).

Traditional healers

In terms of the Traditional Health Practitioner Act of 2007, traditional healers are defined as traditional health practitioners and as persons registered under this Act or in one or more of the categories of the traditional health practitioners. The categories are as follows: diviners, herbalists, traditional birth attendants and traditional surgeons.

Traditional healing

Traditional healing is the oldest form of structured medicine, that is, a medicine that has an underlying set of principles by which it is practiced.

Mental illness

Mental illness refers to any of the various disorders in which a person's thought, emotions or behavior are abnormal and may cause suffering to himself, herself or other people.

Modalities

Modalities refer to a form or mode in which something exists or is done. It is also the way in which something happens or is experienced.

South African Traditional Healer Practitioner Act

In this case, the South African Traditional Healers Practitioner Act refers to the act that establishes the Interim Traditional Health Practitioner Council of South Africa which provides for regulatory framework to ensure the efficiency, safety and quality traditional health service.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research was guided by the indigenous theory of health and illness (Ester, 2010). According to Ester, traditional beliefs and practices concerning illnesses and health are still widely followed, especially in rural areas of South Africa. These beliefs and practices form a coherent system that has maintained individual and social equilibrium for generations. The theory indicates that since the traditional healers are easily accessible and represent the same cultural group as the clients, they are trusted and perceived as well-trained. Also, for the unemployed and the poor, modern medicine is unaffordable and not easily accessible. The theory also emphasizes that some older people in African communities who are not traditional healers, acquired knowledge of indigenous healing from the past generations and are therefore, familiar with traditional prevention, diagnosis, prognosis and medicine. They are usually wise older women and men who give advice to the community members.

The main focus of the indigenous theory of health and illness is to emphasize the fact that traditional beliefs are widely followed by the majority of local communities, especially when it comes to health and illness. And the whole theory is all about the indigenous health and illness that can be one major reasons why the researcher decided to use the theory because it is in line with what the study is about, as a result, the researcher has used this theory as a guide because the study is also focusing on the traditional healing modalities, and this traditional healing modalities still form part of the traditional beliefs. Again, the researcher decided to use this theory due to the fact that it also puts emphasis on the fact that the traditional healers are easily accessible by the community members which makes it possible for them to be more

interested in the traditional healing modalities. The fact that it encompasses the issue of how the traditional healers work, their diagnostic, treatment and prevention methods and how the public in general are becoming familiar with this modalities makes it to be very suitable for the study.

The researcher also used the African Perspective Theory (Henning, 2003). According to the theory, mental illness is associated with the ancestors and spirits that play a role in determining human behaviour. In this theory, mental illness is viewed as a state of behaviour which is caused by different things that include communications with ancestors, witches and disturbances in social relationships. The African Perspective Theory also holds that traditional healers are important in traditional healing as they are the only ones who can communicate with the ancestors.

When it comes to the African way, mental illness is regarded as a communication between the living individual and the ancestors. It is regarded as a way in which the spirits or the ancestors will be informing the living people about certain issues that need to be attended to. The researcher decided to choose this theory because it focuses more on the mental illness and the ancestors. The study was about the traditional healing of mental illness in the provision of medical care, so to get to know more about those modalities, one needs to understand the relationship between mental illness spirits in the context of the African perspective.

The fact that the theory holds that in an African society, the traditional healers are regarded as the mediators between the living and the ancestors has prompted me as a researcher to choose this theory to support my study as traditional healers are the main custodians of traditional healing modalities. The diagnosis, treatment and prevention methods in the healing process are done by traditional healers and they have their own ways of communication with the ancestors.

1.10 DEMARCATION OF DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of the following five chapters:

Chapter 1 gives a background and introduction of traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness and it covers how people perceived traditional healing back then and now, it also covers traditional healing worldwide, in South Africa and Africa as a whole. Chapter one also covers the problem statement of the study, objectives of the study, research questions that guided the researcher, rationale of the study, delimitation of the study and definition key terms.

Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature review. It focuses on what is traditional healing is, the African social and cultural context of mental illness in South Africa, types of traditional healers, traditional healers and mental health in South Africa, traditional healers' diagnostic strategies of mental illness, the perception of traditional healers on mental illness, traditional healers treatment methods of mental illness, traditional healing process and traditional healers' prevention methods of mental illness.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology to be implemented in the study.

Chapter 4 presents data analysis and discussion of the results, and

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with a conclusion and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature on the African perspective of mental illness and focuses on traditional healing as well as different types of traditional healers. The chapter covers the African social and cultural context of mental illness together with traditional healers and mental health in South Africa, traditional healing modalities with regard to: traditional healer's diagnostic strategies of mental illness, traditional healer's treatment of mental illness as well as traditional healer's treatment methods of mental illness. The chapter also seeks to show and explore what the traditional healing process and the traditional healer's approaches to healing are, therefore traditional healer's prevention methods of mental illness, the use of traditional herbal medicine in globalized societies and the traditional healing practices that uses medicinal herbs were reviewed.

2.2 WHAT IS TRADITIONAL HEALING?

Traditional healing is the oldest form of structured medicine that has an underlying set of principles by which it is practiced. It is a branch medicine from which all later forms of medicine developed, including Chinese medicine, Graeco-Arabic Medicine, and of course, modern medicine. Traditional healing was originally an integral part of semi-nomadic and agricultural tribal societies, and although archaeological evidence for its existence only dates back to around 14,000 B.C, its origins are believed to lie much further back and probably predate the last Ice-Age (www.traditionalmedicine.net.au/tradheal.htm).

Traditional healing is as old as they are, it seems as if their medicine is still as effective as before. It is regarded as the healing that most of the African countries were using and they are still using. And in the traditional healing, the traditional healer is the main important person to be engaged in the traditional healing, if one has to define traditional healing in few words, then it can be defined as a process of healing in an African way and that form of healing is practiced and followed not only in Africa, but in the entire world in general.

Unlike other traditional medicines, traditional healing has no philosophical base, as its practices are totally founded on healing knowledge that has been accumulated over thousands of year, and upon the healers personal experience, which includes his/her awareness of, and sense of unity with the natural world, as well

as her/his understanding of the different levels of consciousness within the human psyche. Traditional healers see the universe as a living intelligence that operates according to natural laws that manifest according to specific rules and correspondence, and exercise their inner conviction that the purpose of life and the nature of diseases cannot be understood without a knowledge of these laws and the individual's relationship to the natural world (www.traditionalmedicine.net.au/tradheal.htm).

Traditional healing depends on the past knowledge that has been gathered by elderly people, because of that, traditional healing can also be defined as the way in which ancestors communicate with the traditional healer, and one wouldn't make mention of traditional healing without mentioning their modalities. One of the reasons that make traditional healing to be effective in dealing with various illness is how their modalities are being applied. The knowledge that the healer might have concerning the traditional healing is very useful in dealing with the illness.

Traditional healing is still used and practiced in Africa, as well as in the whole world in general, and it is described as a way or as a healing that covers or includes everybody in the society. The definition of traditional healing does not only include the urban areas, but also rural areas such as the studied area. It was with a good intention that the researcher should conduct the study in a rural area so that the researcher could get different views of the understanding and definition of traditional healing from both urban and rural perspectives, on that note, it is said that the understanding of traditional healing modalities has been known from time immemorial and it has been used as such in different cultural societies.

It seems as if traditional healing does not only have one particular way of treatment as they have several modalities in their healing and the only way to understand it is to have a clear communication with their ancestors in order to diagnose the patient, and the only explanation of traditional healing relies on the traditional healers' ways of perceiving things in order to heal an individual, and the knowledge that they accumulated over the years as being a traditional healers. And some traditional healers describe the traditional healing treatment as a way of communication with the universe.

Thus traditional healers share a profound knowledge and a deep understanding of how natural laws influence living things. It is for this reason that traditional healers are often referred to as wise or clever men or women or as persons of knowledge. It is this knowledge and experiences base that provides the similarities between the core principles of traditional healing through the ages and in different parts of the world (www.traditionalmedicine.net.au/tradheal.htm).

A broad definition of traditional healing can be that it is process of healing. According to most people, traditional healing uses the old traditional ways of treatment. And the explanation of traditional healing can

also include the diagnostic ways and processes that they undergo. We cannot have a definition of traditional healing without making mention of the knowledge that the traditional healer acquire through their communication with the ancestors, in other words, traditional healing is all about how the traditional healers interact with the ancestors in order to help the person who has consulted the traditional healers. This interaction serves a proof that the traditional healers had been informed by their ancestors on how to conduct the process of healing to the individual, for example, the issue of which medicinal herbs to use will only come from the connection that the traditional healers have with their ancestors and the knowledge that they got from that connection and communication.

2.3 THE USE OF TRADITIONAL HERBAL MEDICINE IN GLOBALIZED SOCIETIES

The use of traditional healing practices is widely documented in the literature. Their use remain widespread in all regions of the world and is increasing in industrialized nations. In China, traditional preparation from plants represents 30-50% of total medicine consumption. In Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Zambia, the initial treatment for 60% of the children suffered from high fever and other illness which include mental illness and healing plants are administered at home. Recent statistics show that 80% of the population resorts to traditional medicine (Mpinga, Verloo, Kandala & Chastonay, 2013). In Europe, North America and other industrialized region, more that 50% of the population sought help at least once from indigenous medicine practitioner. In San Francisco, London and South Africa, 75% of people living with both mental illness and HIV/AIDS seek help from traditional healers. In Germany, 90% of people take natural remedy at some point in their life. Traditional medicine are commonly used in the treatment of degenerative diseases such as mental illness (Mpinga *et al.*, 2013: 34).

Mpinga *et al.* (2013) also indicate that there is a wide range of why people turn to use traditional medicine in the societies and they proposed three theories, dissatisfaction of patients who have experienced the downside conventional medicine, finding them sometimes ineffective, impersonal overly high-tech expensive, and personal control by patients who resort to alternative medicine because they find them less authorization and more participative.

For others, the growing interest in the use of traditional medicine can be attributed to several reasons including technological, economic, cultural and social reasons. Where the population has little access to the services and programe of the modern medicine, traditional medicine constitutes the only available and accessible health care service. Traditional medicines represent an economic reality. In South Africa, the trade in traditional medicines is estimated to be worthy 2.9 billion rand per year representing 5.6% of the national health budget (Mpinga *et al.*, 2013:56).

It has been estimated that 70-80% of people worldwide rely largely on traditional, largely herbal medicine to meet their primary healthcare needs, the global demand, and for herbal or plant medicine including the increase in human populations and inadequate provision of modern medicine in developing countries. Medicinal plants can also provide a significant source of income for rural people in developing countries through the sale of wild harvested materials. Both rural and urban dwellers in these countries rely on medicinal plants collected close to their homes while town folks mostly depend on the dried plants transported from rural areas. Traditional medicine is still an important part of the health care system in Tanzania and local traditional healers are the only medical practitioners available within reasonable distance to many Tanzanians residing in the urban and rural parts of the country (Mpinga *et al.*, 2013:76).

In the same study that conducted Mpinga *et al.* (*ibid*), they aver that in almost all the African communities, a big percentage of population relies on the traditional healing and herbs medicine for consumption in treating their illness and they also show statistically that not only the African society use herbal medicine in treating various illness such as mental illness, but also the entire world. And the reason of using traditional herbal medicine may also vary from society to society. For example, in urban areas it might be because those individuals who are sick are not well treated by other western medicine providers. The authors then maintain that there was a time when they used to see and value the traditional healing as something that is only used in Africa and mostly in those deep rural areas, maybe the reason could also be that they were given very limited information about how the traditional healing operates by those who grow before them.

If there is something that one cannot argue with the statistics is that it gives a clear indication on the value that must attached to the traditional healing and their uses of herbal medicine in their healing process. Depending on where you are in the part of the world, the fact still remains as to how they promote their certain cultural norms and value that promote their own ways of living but all in all, those the traditional herbal medicine will be there in one way or another. Only if most people will depart from the saying that traditional herbs are only used in the African continent, the fact is that parts of the world such as Europe, North America, Asia and South America also believe in the herbal medicine plant gives us courage to promote our own African medicinal herbs in treating various illness in our communities.

This research is not only about the herbal medicine of western medicine, the concepts of traditional healing modalities lie all behind the study and in that case, herbal medicine form part of those modalities. In rural areas such as the studied area, herbal medicines are cheaper, easy to get and the traditional healers who are mostly consulted for those herbal are easy to be consulted by community members because they are not expensive.

2.4 TYPES OF TRADITIONAL HEALERS

2.4.1 Diviners

Diviners are the most important intermediaries between humans and the supernatural. Unlike herbalists, no one can become a diviner by personal choice. The ancestors call them (more usually women) and they regard themselves as servants of the ancestors. Diviners concentrate on diagnosing the unexplainable. They analyze the cause of specific events and interpret the message of the ancestors (Engela, 1999:33).

In the community, diviners are regarded as the persons who have clear communication with the ancestors. The diviners are well known for their interpretation of the dreams that come from the ancestors. Most of the diviners indicated that it started as a sickness and one of the reasons of their sickness was that their ancestors were calling them to be diviners. Diviners' works well in dream interpretation, so they can diagnose, treat and prevent illness. One can mistakenly say diviners and prophets are the same and in an actual fact they are not.

2.4.2 Herbalists

Herbalists are ordinary people who have acquired an extensive knowledge of herbal treatment, but who do not possess occult power. They are able to diagnose illness and prescribe herbs, medication and enemas for a range of ailments and are expected to be able to provide protection against witchcraft, to prevent misfortune, and bring prosperity and happiness (Eleanor, 2010:43).

The communication between the herbalists and the ancestors is very limited but most of the herbal medicine are found at the herbalists, they do have the power to detect the type of tree that can be useful in treating various illness including mental illness. The herbalists are also very popular in the community and have a good partnership with the diviners.

2.4.3 Prophet or faith healer

Prophets or faith healers heal within the framework of the African independent churches. In their diagnosis and treatment of patients, prophets or faith healers use prayer, candlelight or water as well as enemas and inhaling of vapour substances poured over heated stones (Eleanor, 2010:67). This types of traditional healing is well classified as the Christian way of healing.

Different types of traditional healers have different roles to play in the society regardless of their differences in their names. The main aim of all types of traditional healers is to provide healing to the society, to diagnose illness, to treat illness and to prevent illness from people such as mental illness. One thing that will always stand out from all the traditional healers is that they both depend on the communication between them and their ancestors in order to diagnose and treat individual illness.

2.4.4 Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA)

A traditional birth attendant (TBA) is also known as traditional midwife, community midwife or lay midwife. Traditional birth attendants provide the majority of primary maternity care in many developing countries and may functions within specific communities in developed countries. Traditional birth attendants provide basic health care support and advice during and after pregnancy and childbirth. They focus attention on pregnancy problem and assist pregnant women at deliveries. They are responsible for duties such as teaching of behavioral avoidance among the pregnant women, ritual bathing of the mother, ritual disposal of the placentas, provision of healing medicine and traditional massage after delivery. They also give advice on postpartum and cord care and provide important support for breastfeeding as well as advice on marriage, contraception and fertility (Twumasi, 1998:76).

2.5 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

In an African perspective, mental illness is regarded as communication between the ancestors and living individual. According to Netshiombo (1997:16), mental illness is seen in an African way, as evil influence inflicted on the individual by outside powers. That is why the rituals conducted to a person who is mentally ill must connect the person with the outside world. According to Madzhe (2014:34), mental illness is seen as an illness caused by different things, including ancestors, witches, and disturbances in social relations. It is characterized by the symptoms such as running away from home without cause, talking alone, beating people for no reason and taking off clothes.

Traditional/indigenous healing as used in this context refers to a system that is often regarded as primitive, pre-literate, tribal or non- western (Boonzaier & Sharp 1988: 37). Traditional healers are in a unique position to understand and heal the illness of their patients because they have thorough knowledge and understanding of the history of their patients and they share similar customs and beliefs. Netshiombo (1997:43) argues that the extent to which the therapists working within a culture shares these beliefs or can persuade their patients to accept their etiological theories, will significantly affect their effectiveness. Traditional medicine may include formalized aspects of remedies passed on by the lay people. Traditional

medicine or the healing practices and ideas of the body physiology and health preservation are known to some in a culture, transmitted informally as general knowledge and practiced or applied by anyone in the culture having prior experience. These terms are often considered interchangeable, even though some authors may prefer one or the other because of certain overtones they may be willing to highlight.

In most cases, if one can be asked what they think traditional healing is, the most given answer could be that it is an old way which was used back then by the indigenous people in treating various illness in the society, and this traditional healing can also be classified as being practiced by old men or women of a particular culture, for example, while I away in the field collecting data, most of the participants made mention that traditional healing goes hand in hand with the way of doing things in a particular culture, for example, in African culture, even though traditional healers are different, the fact is that the traditional medicines that they use are the same and that they treat both the body and spirits makes, which makes it more relevant when one is to define what a traditional healer is.

My understanding of the concepts of traditional healing is that traditional healing is a form of healing that is practiced by certain cultural groups and this cultural groups all have the same characteristics because they all use the very same individual whom they call traditional healers, but this name (traditional healer) also depends on where a particular cultural group is located, but all in all in my view, traditional healing is comprised of a person who is in charge of the healing and the healing consists of different processes that will also depend on what kind of sickness or illness the person is suffering from. Again, traditional healers have different ways of treating their patients and they use different medicines in doing so, for example, after going through the literature, I came to the conclusion that the concept of traditional healing also has to do with the traditional medicine and when one is talking about traditional medicine, herbs or herbal medicinal plants are regarded as the source of same.

According to Kiev (1989:46), traditional healing rituals are culturally organized meaningful events which provide standardized therapeutic experiences for the reduction of anxiety and emotional distress for suffering from a variety of psychiatric illnesses. Then, traditional healing is used in this context to refer to the healing system that is often regarded as primitive, pre-literate, tribal or non- western (Boonzainer & Sharp 1988:40). Traditional healers are in a unique position to understand and heal the illnesses of their patients because they have thorough knowledge and understanding of the history of their patients and they share similar customs and beliefs. Netshiombo (1997:19) argues that accepting their etiological theories will affect their effectiveness.

One of the question that I was having as a researcher was that can we make mention of the traditional healing without including the ritual part of the process of healing? The fact that it is a process made me to draw the conclusion that traditional healing has to do with rituals of a particular culture depending on the fact that the one who is administering the healing process, who is a traditional healer, knows very well the patient that needs help, in other words, from my understanding of the concept of traditional healing, a traditional healer is a unique individual to lead the process of traditional healing rituals and that the traditional healer needs to be aware of the history and belief of the specific cultural group in order to have a clear communication with their ancestors, meaning that traditional healing is also an established process in healing that uses different types of healing in the society.

Mental health is a socially contracted and defined concept, implying that different societies, groups, cultures, institutions and professions have diverse ways of conceptualizing its nature and causes, determining what is mentally healthy and unhealthy and deciding what interventions, if any, are appropriate. Mental illness is a taboo subject that attracts stigma in much of Africa. A study conducted in Uganda revealed that the term depression is not culturally acceptable amongst the population, while another study conducted in Nigeria found that people responded with fear, avoidance and anger to those who were observed to have mental illness. The stigma linked to mental illness can be attributed to lack of education, fear, religious reasoning and general prejudice (Andrew, Ruport & Mavin 2013:56).

The understanding of mental health in the African society can and will always be a difficult thing to do in the sense that even though mental health is regarded as being the issue that is affecting mostly the African community, according to my belief, mental health in an African context is as way of communication of some sorts to the spirits or it can also be attributed to the fact that a person who is mentally ill is being bewitched because of several issues that might have been happening to their lives, for example, in the African context, a person can be said to be being witched because he has being married, he has children or he is doing well at school, all this may lead to mental illness. Even though I did not do a comparative study, but when it comes to western practices, it turns out to be a total different explanation of mental health.

When surveyed on the thought of the cause of mental illness, over a third of Nigerians respondents (34.3%) cited drug misuse as the main cause. Divine wrath and the will of God were seen as the second most prevalent reason with (18.8%) followed by witchcraft/spiritual possession with (17.7%). Very few cited genetics, family relationship or socio-economics status (Andrew et al, 2013). Social stigma has meant that in much of Africa, mental illness is a hidden issue equal to a silent epidemic. Many households with

mentally ill persons hide them for fear of discrimination and ostracism from the community. The social environment in many African countries does not nurture good mental health, mainly due to land conflicts and posts conflicts situations. Poverty remains one of the major trigger agents of mental illness, it is notable that poverty and mental illness are closely related, implying that people living in poverty are more vulnerable to mental illness, while those with pre-existing mental illness are more likely to become trapped in poverty due to decreased capacity to function optimally. There is a close relationship between the level of mental health in a community and the general level of social wellbeing (Andrew *et al.*, 2013:62).

A cross-cultural approach that takes into account the requirements of individual communities is essential, in essence, it should incorporate both local practices and local languages used to express individual mental health needs. This can only be achieved if mental health is promoted as a priority. There is an urgent need for mental health champions in Africa and for the wide dissemination of consistent and coherent messages about mental health.

Besides the fact the traditional healing in Africa is widely known, it is also important that that the awareness of what the mental illness is to the community or to the African society is required, there is an instance wherein some traditional healers can help those people who are suffering from the illness, but the main focus should be on distribution of information that will educate the importance of mental illness education to the society and the what the mental health is, because most African societies do understand that mental illness is just a communication that an individual usually has with their ancestors.

In many cases, both mental illness and physical ill health are interpreted as indicating conflicts or tensions in the social fabric. Helman (1994: 20) uses the terms cultural healing when healing rituals attempt to repair these social tears and reassert threatened values and arbitrate social tensions. Healing takes places at many levels, not only is the patient restoring to health, but so is the community in which he or she lives. The aim of the healer is to resolve the conflicts causing the patient's illness, restore group cohesion and integrate the patient back into normal society. Helman (*ibid*: 26) then maintains that cultural healing may heal social stresses independently of the effects they have on the sick person who provides the occasion for their use. In some cultures, the mental resolution of social conflicts may not be as beneficial to the mentally ill person as Waxler suggested, it may involve imprisoning, killing or driving him from the community. For example, in the past, those possessed with evil spirits in the New Herbies and Fiji were routinely buried alive.

The question why the explanation of mental health in African context will always need to have attributes that the illness has to do with the society or the community that the individual find himself in will always

remain unanswered and one of the reason why this question will not be answered is that different cultural societies have their own understanding of such, to what could be my intake on that could be that the explanation of mental health will always have to do with the social status of the individual and the stigma that is attached to the affected will always remain the same. And again, even though every society has the understanding of such, I think the modalities on how the mental illness can be treated and the fact that it is attributed that most African countries including the South Africans believe that there is no much relationship in the context of explaining what a mental health is in the their South African context, means that there is still a lot to be aligned quickly to the South African context of mental illness with regard to traditional healing.

2.6 TRADITIONAL HEALERS AND MENTAL HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Psychiatric patients access the traditional healing and they enjoy the services rendered by traditional healers in South Africa. The various groups of traditional healers which are available are clearly acceptable to the whole population and variable experiences are reported with different categories of healers and the different treatments provided. An increasing collaboration between psychiatric services and traditional healing is becoming evident, as in other health healing. Reports indicate that many African psychiatric patients seek treatment from traditional healers.

Traditional healers have their own ways of describing a mental ill patient, some say it is a way of communication between them and the ancestors and some would say it is way of communication between then and the universe. But in South African communities, it has been indicated that traditional healers do have access to traditional healing as their services tend not to be far from where they are, maybe that could be the reason why there are many psychiatric patients who also go to traditional healers for treatment. They might have different meanings or explanations for mental illness, but traditional healers in South Africa do understand that mental health can be described in many ways and in most cases, it is regarded as the communication between them and their ancestors (Swarts, 1998:56).

Even though traditional healers are not aware of other healing methods that can be useful in dealing with mental health cases, they are aware of the fact that mental health needs traditional healers in South Africa. Maybe the reason could be that there is a lack of provision in the mental health, especially when it comes to rural based communities. In other words, even though it seems as if the traditional healers have different views on how they can treat the mental ill patients and the fact that they (traditional healers) have more concrete modalities that proved to the effective in the provision of mental illness, there is still no connection or partnership between them and the mental health care institution in South Africa (Swarts, 1998:56).

2.7 TRADITIONAL HEALER'S DIAGNOSTIC STRATEGIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

According to Engela (1999:21), traditional diagnosis is a system that is both an art and a method of seeking to discover the origins of the disease and administering what it is. The diagnostic process not only seeks answers to the question of how the disease originated (immediate cause), but who or what caused the disease (efficient cause), and why it has affected the person at this point in time (ultimate cause) (Engela, 1999:28).

According to Swarts (1998:30), diagnosis in African healing is better understood as related to the causes of illness rather than the classification of the symptoms. Diagnosis is done through different strategies or methods such as dream analysis, bone throwing and physical examination. In African communities, if one has to consult a traditional healer, one of the things that the individual could look up to get from the healer is the diagnosis part of the illness. The traditional diagnostic way is regarded as the best because it embraces everything together, it doesn't only diagnose the body, but also the spirit. A good diagnostic measure will only bring the good treatment and good prevention method to the person who has consulted the traditional healer. Some of the diagnostic strategic methods that are useful and always bring the best in the treatment and in prevention of different illness are as follows:

2.7.1 Bone throwing

Throwing of bones is another strategy that is used by the traditional healers in diagnosing the patients. According to Mufamadi (2010: 36), the throwing of bones also helps traditional healers to obtain the history of the patient as well as to confirm what the patient has said about his or her problem. After throwing the bones, which is another way of communication between the traditional healers and the ancestors, the traditional healer will then be able to understand which treatment or medicine is relevant for the patient.

In traditional healing, traditional bones are regarded as one of the mostly used ways of diagnosing a patient, most of the traditional healers could not operate in the traditional healing process without the traditional bones and one wouldn't talk about the traditional healing without talking or mentioning traditional bones. They do connect the traditional healer, ancestors and the person who is suffering from the illness. Traditional bones do talk to traditional healers differently because different people consult, but the main aim of the traditional bones is to give a clear understanding to the traditional healers as to what is troubling the patient, what could be the cause and what could also be given to the patient as a treatment or as a prevention remedy.

Traditional bones look the same, but they do have different meaning of interpretation when they are thrown down by the traditional healer. Again, it also depends on what type of a traditional healer is using them. But those big traditional bones are regarded as the ones that serve as a form of network for communication with the ancestors. This means that if the traditional healer throw them down, he/she can communicate with their ancestors very easily. The traditional bones are used for diagnostic purposes when the traditional healers want to diagnose a patient. But that doesn't mean that the small ones are not useful in the traditional healing process. The small traditional bones are used by the traditional healers as a supporting system to support the big bones (Makgopa, 2007: 34).

For example, if the traditional healer throw down the traditional bones and different big bones fall next to small ones, then the traditional healer will interpret what it means for the benefit of the patient who is sick. Again, it also depends on how different traditional healers interpret their bones after they throw them down.

2.7.2 Physical examination

The main and most common strategy used by traditional healers is pulse diagnosis in which the traditional healers focus on the interaction between the heart and blood vessels. It is said that the correlation between the two can explain what the patient is suffering from and it also gives the traditional healer an idea of how the treatment can be administered.

Tongue evaluation can also be part of the physical examination that is utilized by the traditional healers in order to find out the kind of sickness that the patient is suffering from, the colour of the tongue will always show the kind of sickness a patient has. The traditional healers will also look at the colour and odor of the urine to determine the kind of sickness that the patient is suffering from.

Ancestors play a major role in the lives of indigenous healers. Sodi (2009:183) maintains that indigenous healers are selected by the ancestors before they can even go for training. He puts it, "the healer understands the significance of ancestral spirits. Sodi (2009:184) states that in order to carry out their wishes on earth, the ancestors choose certain persons to be mediators between the living and the dead. The chosen ones, called *izangoma* (Zulu), *amagqira* (Xhosa), *ndingaka* (Sotho) witch doctors, or indigenous healers are imbued with special powers which include the ability to heal and to divine as a way of showing a strong relationship between the ancestors and the indigenous healers (Makgopa, 2007: 19).

According to the previously described diagnostic strategies, the physical examination of the diagnostic measures in traditional healing it is not regarded as popular compared to dream analysis and bone throwing. Maybe the unpopularity of this diagnosis could also be attributed to the fact that its emphasis is more on the connection between the heart and the blood vessels. Thus, diagnostic strategies are not popular because the traditional healers put more focus on evaluation the physical part of the human being as a way of diagnosing that particular individual. While I was collecting data, I one of the participants to differentiate diagnostic methods from physical examination as part of the diagnostic strategy and the response was that in most cases, the physical examination is used in cases that need high care which necessitates the traditional healers to focus on the connection between the body, the heart and the blood vessels in order to help the patient.

2.8 TRADITIONAL HEALER'S PERCEPTION ON THE CAUSES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

There are so many causes of mental illness. Some believe that when the ancestors are not treated well, they could punish people with illness (Mangesa, 1997), then Nyamiti (1984) rightly points out that when the ancestors are neglected or forgotten by their relatives they are said to be angry with them and send them misfortunes as punishment. Their anger is usually appeased through rituals in the form of food and drinks (Mangesa, 1997). Life in African traditional religion is based on maintaining the balance between the visible and the invisible world. The maintenance of this balance and harmony is humanity's greatest ethical obligation which determines the quality of life.

The other cause of mental illness according to traditional healers could be the fact that the person who is suffering from mental illness could see things that do not exist in this world, so the traditional healers could also explain that by seeing that which does not exist, it might be sign that one should consult more with their ancestors.

The perception of traditional healers on mental illness is that the ancestors might be unhappy with either the lifestyle that the person who is suffering is leading, so they may even cause trouble to them so that the person should refrain from their unbecoming behaviour. And in some cultures, the ancestors can even cause someone to have mental illness so that they may end up performing rituals.

Spellcasting and witchcraft are also other ways that the traditional healers perceive as causes of mental illness. Their perception is that the person could become mentally ill as a result of witchcraft. There is a view that people with evil power could also cause other people to be mentally ill because they see their

enemies as being disrespectful to them, so they make them sick as a way of punishment. Traditional healers view mental illness as an illness which defy scientific treatment and that it can be transmitted through witchcraft. In some Ghanaian communities, especially in Akan communities, one could become mental ill through invocation curses in the name of a river deity, so the other perception of traditional healer could be that mental illness is caused by the fact that someone has been cursed, the curse that could lead someone to be mentally ill might come from the family members or from the society (Obinna, 2012:33).

Many traditional healers also perceive taboo as one of the causes of mental illness. Taboos form an important part of African traditional religion and belief. There are things that in life that are forbidden by a community or group of people. Taboos are also social or religious customs prohibiting or restricting a particular practice or forbidding association with a person. Traditional healers maintain that disobeying some of the taboos could also lead to severe mental illness to a person (Obinna, 2012:47).

2.9 TRADITIONAL HEALER'S TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

In many non- western societies, the great majority of people who display abnormal behaviour, if nonviolent, are more often than not permitted freedom in their communities and their needs are met by members of their families. According to Lambo, in African communities, even the severely psychotic and mentally defective are accommodated as functioning members of the community if they can maintain themselves at some level of suffice. A mentally ill person is permitted to roam the village; if he becomes too disturbed, he is moved to a bush hamlet for a few days or locked in his room, or rather, an indigenous door is constructed within the house for the purpose of passing food to him or her and an outside door allows him to come and go in the community. Nevertheless, the mentally ill who do not respond to reasonable care, although not forced from the village, are left to roam the countryside working, begging or stealing to stay alive, if they do not voluntarily leave, houses are sometimes abandoned to them (George 1978:32).

Yet, even among traditional people, some mental illnesses, especially those involving violence, require more formal modes of treatment. Sometimes treatment is thoroughly professional (viewed within the context of the society in question), and at other times, it is more nearly partakes of their nature of a home remedy as in in the case described by Newman (2001) for Gururumba of New Guinea. Among these people, ghost possession is a state which is dangerous to the individual and the group alike, Newman (2001) describes a case of its recognition and treatment. Price (1986) describes more elaborate professional treatment among the Yoruba of Nigeria. Psychotic patients live in with the healer for an average of 3-4 month, cared for by a family member who remains with the traditional healer. Generally, psychotic patients

are shackled for the first few weeks of their stay until they can be trusted not to run away. Various herbal medicines are used and animal sacrifices may be carried out upon admission. When the patient is deemed ready for release, a discharge ceremony may be held on the banks of a river, involving blood sacrifices, cleaning of the patients of his mental illness and perhaps symbolic death and rebirth into new life (George, 1978: 40).

According to George (1978), the major contrast is often not always found. As in the case of major curing ceremonies for physical ills, major treatment of mental illness is also apt to be a public rite in which the curer may have auxiliaries and in which the audiences may take a significant part. The goals of traditional healings in contrast deal little with reduction, ego-strengthening, and personality modification. Rather, they are pragmatic in approach, aiming at quick results, which means reduction or elimination of the abnormal symptoms that have brought the patient to the therapist. Although rituals may continue for several days and patients may occasionally spend weeks or even months in some societies with noted cures, treatment is generally short term, little any longer than that for treatment of physical ills (George, 1978:42).

Ancestors usually communicate with traditional healers through dreams to enable them to give the patients relevant diagnosis of the sickness. In some cases, the traditional healers will be shown the patient that is coming way before arrival and how they should diagnose and treat the coming patient. Traditional healers will always use the powers from the ancestors through their dreams to diagnose the patient. Dream analysis will also stand out to be the most used method in the diagnostic process in the sense that it is regarded as way in which the traditional healer will have an in depth analysis of what the individual would be suffering from.

2.10 TRADITIONAL HEALERS' TREATMENT METHODS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

According to Engela (1999: 24), traditional healers treat all age group and all problems, using and administering medicines that are readily available and affordable. Their treatment is comprehensive and curative, protective and preventive and consists of elements that can be natural depending on the cause of the disease. Among other treatment methods used by traditional healers, herbal medicine, bathing and steaming, blood cleansing are some of the methods discussed below:

Herbal remedies

Herbal remedies may be constituted of one or several plants. Traditional remedies may be administered orally, on the skin, in the nose, ear or vaginally (Rensberg, 2009:31). Traditional healers use herbal

remedies because they are easy to prepare and easy for the patient to use. Herbal medicines are also useful when treating unseen instances such as mental illness.

Herbal medicine are mostly used in the traditional healing, there are so many different plants or trees that the traditional healers value as important in their healing process because they get their herbal medicine from it. In other words, there cannot be herbal medicine without mentioning the plant or the tree. I used to wonder what could be the source of herbal medicines that the traditional healers use because there is no way in which you could consult a traditional healer and you hear them saying there is lack of herbal medicine that the traditional healer can give to the patients. But I think the fact that the traditional healers have to go to the field to cut trees or plants to make this herbal remedies and the process of grinding them until they are ready to use by the patients makes me to believe that it is a very long and worthy process because at the end, the traditional healers would get what they want from the tree or the plant which is the effectiveness of the herbs to the person who is suffering. Indeed, herbal medicines are well known for their traditional healing process.



Figure 1 Traditional herbal medicines (wet herbs medicine) that are used for treatment (Picture taken by researcher on March 24th 2017)

After having collected different types of herbs from different trees, the traditional healers would usually cut those wet herbs into different pieces and put them according to their groups and trees from which they come. This is done to ensure that the traditional healer does not mix the herbs. And in most cases, the herbs

are not just found from an ordinary field that is found next to the village, most of them are found the mountains.

This herbs are usually placed outside the shrine but inside the traditional healer's home for drying. They are more potent when they are dry than when they are wet. But it also depends on one's needs, on what the patient is suffering and what the ancestors say about the person who is sick, if they say the person should be given a dry herb, then the traditional healer must do so, if they say the person should be given wet herbs, the traditional healers should also do so.

In most African communities if not almost all the African societies, herbal medicines are regarded as effective in dealing with almost every diseases. Traditional healers do have different herbal medicines to give their patient depending on the kind of illness. And when looking at the general understanding of these herbal medicines from the community perspective, it is believed that the herbal medicines are also easy to find from different traditional healers as they always prepared differently for different patients. One common goal of these herbal medicines is that they can treat different illnesses and at the same time, prevent such illness as mental illness.



Figure 2 Another traditional dry and ground herbs (Picture taken by researcher on February 9th 2017)

Herbal medicines are ground, some are mixed together and some are not, and again it depends on the kind of sickness that the person is suffering from. But most of the herbal medicines that are dry are supposed to be ground so that they could be useful to the person who is using them. Traditional healers who are very

passionate about their work are known for taking care of their medicine by dividing the herbs so that they do not mix the dry herbs with the wet ones.

When it comes to the use of herbs, traditional healers emphasize that they label their medicines to make it easy for them when they dispense the medicines to their patients.

Bathing and steaming

Bathing and steaming serve as topical medicines through the skin pores to penetrate, stimulate, invigorate or relax and heal the body (Rensberg 2009: 33). Bathing is also used by the traditional healers to wash off the bad luck and to ward off evil spirits. Steaming is considered more effective than bathing because of the hot temperature.

Most of the traditional healers use bathing and steaming in their healing process, especially when they themselves (traditional healers) find it suitable to use that method. The process of bathing and steaming can be regarded as the longest process of traditional healing process because it is not conducted in one day. The process is repeated for several days depending on how the patient reacts to the treatment itself.

Blood cleansing

In most cases, traditional healers use blood cleansing as a method of treating patients from the sicknesses they have. Rensberg (2009:37) maintains that blood cleansing is applied to detoxify the body of toxins, to open blood vessels and to improve blood circulation. It is also performed after illness to rid the body of any remnant of the disease.

Traditional healers are potentially valuable partners in the delivery of health care, they are readily available and ubiquitous in most cases, and share the same culture, beliefs and values with their patients. Their methods are effective in certain illnesses (e.g. psychosomatic illness) as is their use of local herbs and medical plants for therapeutic purposes. They are skilled in interpersonal resolution, including counselling and they can fill the vacuum in health-care created by the shortage of biomedical health personnel for delivery of primary health-care. They are also prepared to consider safer practices and to eliminate those traditional remedies and practices harmful to patients.

Traditional healers were looked down upon by the government, missionaries, and biomedical as charlatans and unscrupulous antagonists of biomedicine who exploit an ignorant population. But African traditional healing practices are based on beliefs that existed long before the development and spread of modern medicine. Traditional healing expertise is intricately intertwined with cultural and cosmic phenomenology.

Although it is not possible to find a single African traditional healing system, the differences between cultures south of the Sahara are sufficiently small for generalizations to be made within certain limits. To understand the African traditional healer and the whole traditional process, one needs to understand African religion. The whole African belief system is so fundamental that any form of healing that ignores these beliefs is psychologically unsatisfactory and in some cases unaccountable (Kubukeli, 1999:37).

The biomedical use of herbs is said to be as old as mankind itself. WHO (2008) estimates that herbalism is three to four times more commonly practiced than conventional medicine worldwide, and even conventional doctors rely heavily on plant-based medicines: an increasing number of prescriptions are plant-based. Although many herbs and plants used medicinally in South Africa today were imported from Europe, there is a vast array of indigenous medicinal plants here too. More species of indigenous plants are sold commercially as traditional medicines in KwaZulu-Natal. Traditional medicine from herbs is widely practiced throughout the rest of Africa. Some plants are so popular that the demand for them is threatening their very survival on the subcontinent (*ibid*: 40).

Today, there is increased sensitivity towards traditional healers. Along with the rest of the world, the South African Department of Health is looking at improving conditions for traditional healers associations. In addition, the Indigenous Knowledge System Programme is working towards registration with the objective that it will lead to the protection of intellectual property rights, equitable compensation and promotion and the improvement of traditional healing system (*ibid*:45).

Traditional healing encompasses the concept that the human body is an organism with self-healing and strong recuperative capabilities, which, if maintained in optimal conditional is capable of ongoing health and longevity, therefore traditional healers accept that most diseases can be prevented if the basic and immutable laws of nature are obeyed, where disease does exist, a traditional healer aims to correct both the internal imbalances as well as the external disharmonies so that the natural healing power can once again act freely and restore health. Traditional healers do not claim to cure disease, as this can only be accomplished by nature's healing power. They do however, utilize a therapeutic approach that follows laws of nature in order to facilitate the restoration of the proper balance between the individual's internal and external relationship with nature and its law, and in this way, facilitates the body's natural healing capacity, thus leading to a return of mental health-care.

After the physical examination as a diagnostic strategies, blood cleaning always emerges, blood cleansing has to do with the cleaning of blood in relations to getting rid of negative things that could have affected

the whole body of a human being, that's where the traditional healer will conduct a process of cleansing the blood that will obviously start with the physical examination of the patient. When talking about the physical examination, we are talking about the process wherein the traditional healers would differently examine the affected blood vessels of the patient and the outcomes of that examination leads to blood cleansing that will enable the healer to decide on what type of prevention methods can or cannot be used towards the illness. Learning from the community that I was growing from, I used to notice that this blood cleansing is mostly done to the young children, especially through the rituals process called *Muthuso* in a *Venda* culture, but that does not mean that the blood cleansing is done only to children, but it is also done to people of all ages.

TRADITIONAL HEALERS APPROACHES TO HEALING

The theory underlying traditional medicine in many Blacks ethnic groups of South Africa is essentially similar, namely that disease is viewed as a supernatural phenomenon governed by a hierarchy of vital powers beginning with the most powerful deity followed by lesser spiritual entities, ancestral spirits, living persons, animals, plants and other objects. Traditional medicine has at its base a deep belief in the interactions between the spiritual and physical well-being. Traditional healers therefore, use a holistic approach in dealing with health and illness. This implies that the healers deal with the complete person and provide treatment for physical, psychological, spiritual, or the physical from the supernatural. Furthermore, the traditional healing process follows different stages, identification of the cause or discovery of violation of established order through supernatural divination, removal of the hostile sources by neutralization of the sorcerer or seeking of the ancestor's forgiveness with sacrifices and rituals to appease their anger or by prescription of certain medication (Truter, 2007:22-30).

Patients are treated as integral components of a family and of a community at large rather than as isolated individuals. Family members are almost always involved and the healing process is facilitated by the broader involvement of members of the community. Traditional health practitioners basically follow three principles: patients must be completely satisfied that they and their symptoms are taken seriously and that they are given enough time to express their fear, the healers study the patient as a whole and not split the body and mind into two separate entities, the healers never consider the patient as an isolated individual, but as an integral component of a family and a community (*ibid*: 41).

The traditional healers' approach to healing seems to be a long process but it include the whole human being, first and for most the traditional healers would definitely consult the ancestors in relation to what should happen in the treatment of the individual person. Consultation of the traditional healer to their

ancestors is viewed as the one that establishes good communication between the two (traditional healer and the ancestors) even before the individual consulted the healers, meaning the whole process or the approaches of healing in an African way start with the consultation of traditional healers with their ancestors that leads to more connection and the starting of communication between them (Abdool et al, 1994:32).

As indicated, traditional healing encompasses the whole body of a human being, in an African perspective, if the traditional healer is about to start with healing, several processes need to be followed such as when the traditional healer is informing other family members of the person that needs a particular healing, this is done in order for that family to also engage with their own ancestors in order to have a clear and effective way of healing. The issue of informing the family member in the approaches to healing by traditional healing is done to emphasis that in African communities, all share and understand each other's concern regardless of what is coming in the way of the other individual.

It is determined by the traditional healer after the consultation with both the family members and the ancestors on the appropriateness of undergoing certain rituals, meaning that even the performance of rituals forms part of the traditional healers approach to the healing. It is my understanding that the rituals are regarded as the most important part in the healing process. The rituals can lead to the treatment and prevention strategies that can be used. It can be concluded that choosing the right treatment and preventing methods could also be part of the approaches that will lead to the healing. The effectiveness of the healing is determined how the traditional healer chooses his/ her treatment and prevention methods (*ibid*: 49).

As much as the traditional healer care about their patients in their healing, it is of importance to even establish the follow- up visitation that the traditional healer would want to see happening between them (traditional healer and the patients). And the visitation or the follow-up is also meant to evaluate the effectiveness of the traditional herbal medicine that was applied to the individual, whether they were helpful or if there is a need to have more consultation. This shows that traditional healing in its approaches really takes care of the patient until he/she is completely healed from their respective illness.

TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES USING MEDICINAL HERBS

African traditional medical practitioners are extensively useful in South Africa and are important national health care resources. Traditional healers are potentially valuable partners in the delivery of health care. They are already available, ubiquitous in most cases, and share the same culture, beliefs and values as their patients. Their methods are effective in certain illness e.g. mental illness, as is their use of local herbs and medicinal plants for therapeutic purposes. They are skilled in interpersonal reactions including counselling, and can fill the vacuum in health care which created by the shortage of biomedical health personal for delivery of primary health care. They are also prepared to consider safer practices and eliminate those traditional remedies and practices which are harmful to patients (Kubukeli, 1999:27).

Traditional healers are regarded as important in most rural areas African communities because of their important role of healing in society. But then, even though they are regarded as important, I don't think they are given the fair treatment and the publicity they deserve in promoting the modalities of traditional healing. As a researcher and as an African individual living in the African continent, I can also testify that traditional healers are more of respectful to both the patient and the ancestors as they mostly depend on them. Even though the traditional healer are not well trained in their practices, they usually get the healing gift from their ancestors. Growing up in the community, I discovered that the in traditional healing, herbs are the only medicinal plants that are used to treat a variety of sicknesses. The medicinal herbs will differ according to the sickness that the patient is suffering from. The fact that this herbal medicines are prepared well in advance shows that the traditional healers know when that patient will come and this makes their medicines to be more effective.

Health is defined by the WHO as a complete state of physical and mental wellbeing, and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity. The definition is in line with the practices of traditional healers who look at the whole body (physical, mental, spiritual), whereas biomedicine heals only the affected parts of the body and is forever looking for germs.

It is generally accepted that the African traditional healer understands the patient's beliefs about their illness, and that concepts of health within the framework of African culture are more social than biological. Traditional healing is to a large extent premised on this, part of the appeal of traditional healing is its historic approach that views the patient as more than simply a sum of organ system and neurophysiological hydraulics. Traditional healers were looked upon by the government, missionaries, and biomedicine who exploited an ignorant population. But African traditional healing practices ae based on beliefs that existed long before the development and spread of modern medicine. These practices vary widely spread between

different African countries, in keeping with their social and cultural heritages and traditions (Kubukeli, 1999:38).

In *Tshivenda*, health is referred to as *Mutakalo*, and when it comes to health, it refers to be the physical and the mental state of a person. According to WHO, health has to do with the whole wellbeing of a person (WHO: 2008:11).

The scenario that happened while I was in the field collecting data shows the importance of herbs in the traditional healing. As I was discussing some of the effectiveness of traditional medicinal herbs in the traditional healing with one of the participants after the interview, I asked that particular individual to tell me what would happen if a patient consults them and is not given anything to use to treat the illness or to prevent the illness, the response was that there is no way in which a typical scenario would happen, each and every traditional healer would have a herbal medicine to give to their patients. He also pointed out that even the patients themselves would start to question their operational process of healing and the effectiveness of their diagnostics measures if not given herbal treatment. That gave me an indication that traditional healing indeed uses traditional medicinal herbs in their healing process.

Traditional healing's expertise is intricately intertwined with cultural and cosmic phenomenology. Although it is not possible to find a single African traditional healing system, the differences between cultures south of the Sahara are sufficiently small for generalization to be made within certain limits. To understand the African traditional healer and the whole traditional process, one needs to understand African religion. The whole African belief system is so fundamental that any form of healing process that ignores these beliefs is psychologically unsatisfactory and in some cases unaccountable. It is the only coherent system that has maintained the social equilibrium of the African people for generations (Kubukeli, 1999:56).

The medicinal use of herbs is said to be as old as mankind itself. WHO estimates that herbalism is three to four times more commonly practiced than conventional medicine worldwide? And even conventional doctors rely heavily on plant-based medicines as their increased number of prescriptions are plant based. Although many herbs and plants used medicinally in South Africa today were imported from Europe, there is a vast array of indigenous medicinal plants here too. More than 400 species of indigenous plants are sold commercially as traditional medicines in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The use of herbs as traditional medicine is widely practiced throughout the rest of Southern African. Some plants are so popular that their exploitation is threatening their very survival on the subcontinent (Kubukeli, 1999:61).

TRADITIONAL HEALING PROCESS

African traditional healing process practices are based on beliefs which existed long before the development and spread of modern scientific medicine. These practices vary widely between different African countries in keeping with their social and cultural heritages and traditions. This is in keeping with the World Health Organization definition of health which states that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Neuman (2001) puts it this way: the medical doctor treats the diseases while the traditional healers treat the persons who happen to be ill (Abdool K, Ziqubu P, Arendse R, 1994:17).

Traditionally, the process of traditional healing includes the variety of issues such as how and when it must happen, the most interesting part about traditional healing is that it involves each and every cultures' beliefs and ways of completing the process of healing. In the Venda culture, the process of traditional healing totally needs commitment from both the traditional healers and the communities at large. But that also applies to different African cultures as they all believe in they own cultural ways of doing things. What an individual believes in is the most important aspects that the traditional healing process will start to operate from. But the important good thing about traditional healing is that it can heal the whole body.

The traditional healer's hospital is his home, where the physically and mentally ill live together without any separation or stigmatization of one group by the other. They are part of a therapeutic community where staff, patients and relatives share the same facilities. The non-separation of a patient from his social environment serves to expedite the healing process and renders readjustment to society much easier (Abdool et al., 1994:38).

In what happen to be the traditional healing, one needs to understand that the whole process of healing happens between the traditional healer and the patients, depending on the status of the illness, it is also recommended that after thorough diagnosis of a person who is ill, the traditional healer can also admit the person who is ill, that is done in order for the healer to treat the patient while he/she is nearer to them. So, admission is done by the healer himself and again at his home. I once visited a traditional healer to make appointment for data collection interview. The traditional healer came to me and indicated that she was still preparing soft porridge for the patients who are not well as their state of illness was not good at all. Thenceforth, I learnt that the traditional healing process also involves the admission of patients.

Illness is regarded by traditional African people as the material sign of a lack of harmony between a person and his social environment. This sign can in itself be a manifestation of punishment, either when the

individual displeases the ancestral world or when certain taboos and societal norms that disturb the normal balance of natural phenomenon or cause the imbalance in the spiritual world are transgressed. African traditional healers may even prescribe or dispense bio medic's drugs. The traditional healing process consequently follows different stages. The first is the identification of the cause or discovery or violation of established order through supernatural divination, the second is the removal of the hostile source by neutralization of the sorcerer or seeking of the ancestors' forgiveness with sacrifices and rituals to appease their anger, or by prescription of a certain medication (Abdool et al., 1994:40).

If the admission of the patients is done in the traditional home rather than in the hospital, it can also mean that the healer can have a special connection with the patients that enable him/herself to give a proper analysis of the illness and the proper diagnostic, treatment and prevention of the illness. According to one traditional healer, those signs or actions that are shown by patients' need to be monitored. In other words, in the traditional healing process, there seems to be a variety of signs that the patient can show to the healers and those signs or communications represent several issues in the spirit realm of the traditional healer. The illness in the traditional healing process can be an indication of the punishment that is attributed to them by ancestors or it can be the imbalances of the spiritual world to the patients. There is indeed, quite long processes in the traditional healing and in those processes which involve the diagnosis of the causes done by the healer, the removal or the treatment or the prevention that will be attached to the illness, not to forget that in the traditional healing process, there will also be rituals that need to be performed. Those rituals include the administering of herbal medicine for swallowing, bathing and for use as ointment.

2.11 TRADITIONAL HEALER'S PREVENTION METHODS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

According to Swatz (1998: 67), traditional healers also protect their clients from possible affliction. This is because according to them, illness is perceived as coming from destabilized forces. Protection of illness therefore, involves warding off the negative forces of witchcraft and maintaining equilibrium with other people, the spirits and the ancestors. Diagnosis in African indigenous healing may be better understood as related to theories of causation of illness or problems rather than to classification of symptoms.

Protection is one thing that people want from the traditional healers, actually, when individual consult the traditional healers, they want to be protected from what is happening in their lives at that very moment, especially when it comes to issue of illness.. It is also said that traditional healers' prevention of illness does not only involve the physical body, but also the forces that can be attributed to the illness, the spirits that

can also be linked to the illness. The diagnosis done by traditional healers leads to treatment and treatment to the process of prevention which tends to be effective.

Swatz (1998) further opines that traditional healers, in their prevention methods, have the ability to eliminate the possibility of an illness that can attack a person in a near future. The healers, the person who is ill and the ancestors have to take part in the prevention process.

As a researcher, I also understand that the traditional healers can also detect the illness that could attack someone in the near future through their traditional bones, but the fact that there can be different ways to also detect or prevent the illness from attacking a person or member of the family in the near future is really questionable.

The study done by Madzhie (2014:25), shows that prevention can be done in two ways, that is, mental illness can be prevented after birth and can also be prevented after the treatment of mental illness. After the treatment of mental illness, a patient is given herbs that prevent the illness from re-attacking the patient. Mental illness can also be prevented when a child is born. *Muthuso*, is done when a new born is given medicine to prevent all types of illnesses, including medication which makes it difficult for witches to bewitch the protected person. Prevention can also be done after mental illness treatment, after the whole treatment of mental illness, the traditional healer will give the patient medicine to prevent mental illness from coming back.

Traditional healers believe that prevention can be done by following the instructions from the ancestors and their spirits. The belief in most communities is that if individuals want to prevent bad things from happening to them, they should follow the ancestral way of doing things such as pleasing them by doing some rituals. According to Sodi (2009:18), when preventing illness, traditional healers look at the individual as a whole (health and social relationship) and give guidance to maintain optimum health.

Indeed, it is a two way traffic wherein the traditional healers will wait for the communication with their ancestors to show them the how to prevent the illness depending on the conditions of the patient, again, other essential ways of prevention illness is for the individual not to forget who they are and start to have a clear understanding and communication with their ancestors, in this way, the traditional healers make mention the fact that the ancestors will show them the way forward on the prevention strategies of illness. In other words, there is no way that prevention can happen without communication of how to do it with the ancestors. Traditional healers follow the protocol of interaction with ancestors to ensure that the prevention methods of illness are more effective when dealing with a variety of such illnesses.

2.12 CHALLENGES FACED BY TRADITIONAL HEALERS IN TREATING MENTAL ILLNESS

Traditional healing has been in the existence for centuries and has been used in treating mental illness even though the acknowledgement of its role in the health system and in the society has been an uphill battle. The practice is still seen by others as demonic and closely related to witchcraft, and that makes it very difficult for a mental ill patients to consult traditional healers.

In their discussion on the challenges and opportunities of the provision of traditional healing into counselling and psychotherapy, Mufamadi and Sodi (2010:27) maintain that for traditional healers, the process is challenged by the following considerations, lack of funding to enable them to maintain acceptable standards of care or to allow their patients to benefit from the effectiveness of their herbal treatment in the management of opportunistic mental illness, lack of constructive and open-ended communications among practitioners or traditional healers, and lack of equivalent skills to counsellors and psychologists in their health care systems which makes it difficult for them to understand their role as they rely mostly on communication with their ancestors.

As old as the traditional healing is, there is still a lot to be discovered and learnt from this healing that could be helpful in dealing with mental illness. It is the intention of the traditional healers to treat mental illness, but it seems as if they are not given much attention that they could use in doing so. Traditional healing is an old way of healing which as is related to bad things that usually happen in the community. If one has to explain what traditional healing is to a group of people, before one even finishes with the explanation, one could be judged. This makes it very hard for the traditional healers to provide the services that they should to the individual that needs help. In other words, the traditional healers have the challenge of not being accepted by some of the community members.

The modalities of traditional healers in treating mental illness is misjudged. They are misinterpreted and do not get the attention which they were supposed to get even though their modalities are effective. Maybe the judgment which the traditional healers receive from most of the community members could be attributed to the fact that the traditional healers are not seen as well trained or educated to be able to help individuals who are suffering from mental illness.

We all know that every healing practice, regardless of the kind of healing practice that it is, fully needs the support from both the government and the community. So, it seems as if there is another challenge for traditional healers not getting the support that they will want in supporting their modalities in the treating of mental illness. For example, it is very rare to find the government through the Department of Health

publicly supporting and acknowledging educational programs that will be educating the community on how the traditional healers operate in dealing with a variety of illness including mental illness. Publicity is one of the challenges that the traditional healers are facing as they are not getting support, especially from those who are responsible for healthcare services.

We cannot argue the fact that traditional healers are not like medical doctors. Medical doctors always attend medical schools prior to being qualified as doctors, but traditional healers do not usually go to school to be healers. This means that a person can become a traditional healer even though he or she is not well educated, but only as a result of the calling from the ancestors. The key difference between medical doctors and traditional healers is that most traditional healers are indeed not educated. As much as the world is changing, traditional healing is still the same and their modalities are still regarded as best by the most African communities. The challenge that always arises while the traditional healers are providing treatment to mental illness is that the different stakeholders, including public and the private institutions, are failing to understand that traditional healers do not need any formal education in order for them to practice their healing process, especially in connection with mental illness. It should therefore be accepted that traditional healers should continue to practice their healing modalities in treating mental illness without being questioned of their level of education, this will in turn, bring about positive results to the traditional healers, the community and the affected patients.

2.13 CONCLUSION

With the existing literature that is available about the traditional healing in the study area and the whole country in general, traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness are not clearly explained and not well explored. Most of the studies that have been conducted on traditional healing do not include the modalities of traditional healing in the provision of mental illness. Some of the recent authors only explore the effectiveness of traditional healing in the health system and do not give a clear understanding of how it works and the process that one needs to go through in the process of traditional healing. Given the high rate of people suffering from mental illness, traditional healing modalities need to be introduced and understood by all people.

The study therefore, has made a significant contribution to the health system in the provision of mental illness. The study also reviewed traditional healing which most people regard as an old way of treating people. The chapter also covered the African, social and cultural contexts of mental health, what mental health means

in an African community, traditional healers diagnostic methods of mental illness, treatment and prevention method, traditional healing process and the use of traditional herbal medicine in globalized societies.

The study was also encouraged by the fact it is not long since traditional healing was recognized by the South African government in health system regardless of the fact that it is an effective way of dealing with mental illness. For that reason, most of the previous authors and researchers focused on the traditional healing only and not its modalities. This study will not only give a clear understanding of what traditional healing is, but will also explain how traditional healers operate in their traditional healing process in the provision of mental illness.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to the process, principles and procedures by which a researcher approaches problems and seeks answers (Kobus, 2011:20). The focus of the chapter is on the nature of the study, research design, population and location of the study, sampling procedures, data collection procedures and instruments, data analysis and ethical consideration (Silverman, 2006:37).

Research methodology is a continuous process of a particular method or methods for reaching a desired end (Bless, Higson & Smith 2006:32). Research methodology gives the information about the research design, population and sample, sampling method, research instrument, data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration.

This section focuses on the research methodology that was used in the study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design. Sampling, data collection, data analysis are covered in this section. The trustworthiness of the findings of the study, ethical considerations and dissemination of research findings that was followed are also dealt with in this chapter. Research methodology is a continuous process in the study of a particular method or methods for reaching a desired end. And with the permission of the participants, the researcher will also show pictures as figures. Such pictures include the traditional bones that are used by traditional healers, traditional herbs and medicine, and the picture of a researcher conducting an interview with one of the participants, all this were done with the consent of the participants (see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan or strategy which moves the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. The choice of a research design is based on the researcher's assumptions, research skills and research practices and influences the way in which he or she collects data. The research design that was used in this research is mainly qualitative. Qualitative design is based on the naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context or real world setting and in general, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate

the phenomenon of interest. A case study research design was employed. A qualitative study is aimed at getting the findings that represents the participants' views to the studies phenomena. Additionally, a qualitative study seeks to understand a given problem statement or studied topic from the study population. This design was selected by the researcher because he found it very suitable in the sense that a qualitative method strives to get an in-depth analysis of the studied phenomena. The design made it possible for the researcher to get the required information which was the traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness (Kobus 2011:21-32).

3.2.1 Case study

According to Yin (2003:37), a case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. From an interpretivist's perspective, the typical characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a comprehensive (holistic) understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under the study. According to Kobus (2011), case study aims at giving greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation. In this case, the aim is to have an in-depth analysis of traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental health-care.

Considering the nature of the study, the relevance of employing case study was that participants were having the same understanding of the studied phenomena, In this case, the researcher was able to solicit in-depth analysis of traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental health illness from the participants, and the responses from the participants pointed out that it was an everyday life issue to consult traditional healers and as for traditional healers, they indicated that they have different modalities in their traditional healing process.

3.3 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

Location of the study refers to the entire set of objects and events or groups of people about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics (Creswell, 1994: 36). The location of the study was Vhembe district of the Limpopo province which consists of four municipalities, namely: Makhado, Collins Chabane, Musina and Thulamela. The researcher also identified and visited the traditional healers from Vhembe district for the collection of data in the form of interviews.

3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population is referred to as a large group of many cases from which researchers draw a sample and to which results from a sample are generalized (Lawrence, 2011). In this case, the population that was studied came from traditional healers around Vhembe district of Limpopo province and the importance of having a population of the study was to get the required information that would help in answering the research questions of the study.

3.5 SAMPLING

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population of the study. Qualitative research is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than probability or random sampling approaches. Purposive sampling is where the researcher chooses sampling with the aim on the back of their mind. Most of the participants that were chosen by the researcher had the same characteristics that were needed for the study. Traditional healers who were purposively sampled provided the researcher with relevant and informative data that were needed in the study. A sample of 5 traditional healers aged 45 to 80 years was selected using purposive sampling. This means that the research participants were selected on the basis of some defining characteristics that made them the holders of the data needed for the study (Kobus, 2011:31). According to De Vos et al. (2012:392), purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher in that a sample is an attribute of the population that serves the purpose of the study best. The researcher chose the first participant purposely knowing that the selected participant is a traditional healer and that he knows more about the traditional healing modalities in connection with mental illness. The first participant doesn't live very far from the researcher so it was purposive for the researcher to select that particular participant.

The researcher also adopted snowballing sampling techniques. According to Kobus (2011:29), snowball sampling is also known as chain referral sampling which is a method whereby participants with whom contact has already been made are used to penetrate their social networks to refer the researcher to other participants who could potentially take part in or contribute to the study. After the interview with the first participant, the participant referred me to another traditional healer who knows and understands the issue of mental illness and the modalities that can be used in diagnosing, treating and preventing mental illness. After every interview, the participants would always refer me to the next traditional whom they know.

The researcher secured an appointment with a well-known traditional healer where after an interview date and time were arranged. After the interview, the traditional healer referred me to one of her friends who is also a traditional healer and the next traditional healer also did the same. The process of referral was very productive to the study because all the participants were knowledge holders of the study as they were all traditional healers. The researcher understood that to get an appointment for an interview with a traditional healer was not an easy task because traditional healers are well known for their confidentiality and one of their rules is that you cannot just show up to a traditional healer's home's and demand to interview them. The researcher was patient enough to depend more on referrals from one traditional healer to another and finally the interviews went through successfully.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher conducted interviews to collect data. The researcher arranged the date and time for interviews with the participants where the interviews lasted for about thirty minutes. The interviews took place at the participants' home. English was used as a language but interpretations of English to Tshivenda language were done. A tape recorder was used in the interviews and notes were taken during the interviews for backup purposes.

Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the main aim of the interview. It was outlined to the participants that the purpose of the study was strictly for academic purposes and that the researcher is a student at the University Of Venda, under the Department of African Studies, all this were detailed in the consent letter and explained in more or less the same way.

The enthusiasm and willingness of the participants in the study was shown by some of the participants while the interview was on. The researcher would ask one question and participants would respond to the question and elaborate more and more on the answer given, this shows that indeed the participants were enjoying the interview and that they had more information needed by the researcher.



Figure 3 The researcher documenting field data (Picture taken on February 9th 2017)

When the researcher was interviewing one of the participants, it was a little bit awkward inside the participant's shrine, even though it was not for the first for the researcher to conduct interview inside the participant shrine. The researcher was really impressed at how the participants were willingly to answer the questions raised. During the process of the interview, participant explained in full detail the traditional modalities in the provision of mental illness. She pointed out that it is a process that one needs to go through. Apart from listening and observing what the participant was explaining, the researcher was at the same also writing down everything that was said by participant.

The interview went through inside the traditional healers' shrine, this is where participants conduct their traditional healing process which include diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Traditional healers' shrine is a sacred place which means a person cannot just get in the house without the traditional healer's consent. As a researcher, to get the chance to interview the participant inside her own shrine was not an easy task, it took more time to arrange with the traditional healer to use a shrine as a place where we could conduct our interview as it was always occupied by traditional healer's patients.

One of the rules to be observed when entering the traditional healer's shrine is that one should take off one's shoes before entering the shrine and that's what the researcher did. Both the researcher and the participant were seated on the traditional mat. One thing that was interesting to note was that there was no chair inside the shrine as traditional healers are only allowed to communicate with ancestors while sitting on a mat.

A leopard skin that was displayed on the wall of the healer's shrine was explained by participant as a proof that she had undergone training for some time and that training was communicated to her by the ancestors through the dreams. She also pointed out that after the training, she again got communication from the ancestors that she should go to the mountain where she found the leopard skin. The leopard skin is working as proof that indeed she underwent training and that she has communication with the ancestors, I could also interpret in my own understanding that it is a sort of certificate of completion of training.

The traditional bones and traditional herbs that are inside the shrine were shown to the participant by the ancestors. They were collected from the field and some of the herbs are not ordinary herbs that can be found in any field other than from the mountain. They are regarded as useful and infallible for saving the lives of people, meaning that those herbs are only given to specific people who are in critical conditions after consultation with the traditional healers. All the objects that are found in the traditional shrine are believed to be found by the traditional healers themselves with the communication they got from the ancestors through dreams and such objects include stones, barks of trees and bottled water from the river.

During the interviews, the researcher was accompanied by a research assistant who was really helpful not only in collecting data and interpreting English to Tshivenda, but also very informative in the sense that she was a daughter of one of the traditional healers who were interviewed. Even though the research assistant didn't know much in connection with the diagnostic, treatment and prevention methods of mental illness, she was aware of the different profiles of the client who visits her father, she pointed out that they range from young people to old people.

The researcher used the following research instruments to get the data: Unstructured interviews with open ended-questions and in-depth interview as discussed below:

3.6.1 Research Instrument

Bless et al. (2006:78) define instrument as the measuring device or procedure over the course of the study. For an example, using one person to conduct an assessment interview at past- test scores. For the purpose of this research study, interview guide was used as an instrument for data collection. On the interview guide, the researcher used one round of open-ended, semi-structured and an in-depth interview.

The researcher chose semi-structured and open ended question for an interview, as open-ended question allowed the participants to share their experiences and knowledge about traditional healing with relating to mental illness, it was a wise move for the researcher to use open-ended question because close-ended question would not have allowed the participant to do so. For the entire interview, the researcher was using the semi –structured interview, he prepared a certain set of questions to be covered by the participants. All the interviews were conducted using Tshivenda language as it is the only language that participants could understand. Using of participants’ home language which was Tshivenda enabled participants to openly discuss everything that was related to the questions and even elaborated more on the question, they not only answered the questions, but they would also ask questions for clarity.

3.6.2 Semi- Structured interview

The researcher conducted unstructured interviews whereby an interview schedule was used (see Appendix 1). According to de Vos (2012: 292) semi-structured interview is also referred to as in-depth interview which merely extends and formalizes conversation. It is referred to as a conversation with a purpose. In this regard, the purpose was to explore traditional healing in the provision of mental illness. The researcher employed unstructured interview because the interviewer and respondents were engaging in a formal interview which had a schedule time to sit and speak with each other about the research topic and the researcher was also allowed to ask questions.

The research was conducted in rural areas and most of the participants were old people who could not read or to write, so reading all the interview questions was necessary to make the participants aware of the kind of information the researcher was looking for. Furthermore, from reading the question one by one, the researcher again started asking the questions while the participants were responding. In the process of interviewing, the researcher explained to the participants about the interview and the ethical issues that

would be adhered to which include confidentiality and anonymity. The traditional healers were informed that the information that they were giving out would not be linked to their names whatsoever.

One of the traditional healers asked the researcher why she had been chosen to be part of the study and who told the researcher that she could be useful in this topic. And to the researcher' mind, the questions implied that the traditional healers needed confidentiality and anonymity in their practices. And the response from the researcher was that one of the traditional healers referred him to the participant. The response that was given by the researcher to participant made the participant to be freer in answering all the questions.

Open ended-questions

Open-ended questions often take the form of a conversation with the intention that the researcher explores with the participant his or her own views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about certain events or phenomena. Open-ended interviews are normally spread over a period of time and consist of a series of interviews. According to Kobus (2011), in open-ended questions, participants may propose solutions or provide insight into the event, but the focus is mainly on their own perceptions of the event or phenomenon studied.

The researcher applied open-ended questions because of a formal conversation which emerged between the researcher and the traditional healer with the intention that the traditional healers would share the information about the traditional healing modalities in provision of mental illness. After several series of interviews using open-ended questions, some of the participants revealed important information that was needed. In one of the interviews, the researcher started with a conversation, where after, the how part just emerged from the conversation.

According to Babbie (2010), an in depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interview with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situations. In-depth interviews are useful when you want a detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviour or want to explore new issues in depth.

The relevance of using in-depth interview in this study was that a small number of traditional healers was selected and the aim of doing so was to get detailed information about the topic. Participant showed a great a deal of knowledge and in-depth information that the researcher wanted which was on the traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness. Most of the traditional healers seemed to know a lot about these modalities which included the way they treat mental illness, and their thoughts about traditional healing modalities which was just what the researcher was in need of for the study.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is usually an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. Phrased differently, it tries to establish how participants make meaning of specific phenomena by analyzing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, value, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomena (Kobus, 2011). According to De Vos et al. (2012), qualitative analysis is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship. The idea of analysis implies some kind of transformation. The researcher used interpretive analysis, that's where you start with some collection of qualitative data and then process it through analytical procedures, into a clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used thematic method of analysis. Open-coding was done after going through the collected data several times and that made it easy for the researcher in the interpretation of data, Themes were also made from different responses of the participants, different cases emerged from the analysis, and the tape recorded interviews and the camera were reviewed several times for transcription purposes.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS

Reliability and validity, specifically as far as the research instruments are concerned, are crucial aspects in qualitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher is the data gathering instrument. Thus, it seems that when qualitative researchers speak of research validity and reliability, they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy. Lincon and Guba (1985:991) include credibility, applicability, dependability and conformity as the key criteria of trustworthiness and these are constructed to parallel the conventional criteria of inquiry of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality respectively (Kobus, 2011:19).

The following measures of trustworthiness were adhered to:

3.8.1 Credibility

This is the alternative to internal validity in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been accurately identified and described. The researcher asks if there is a match between research participant views and researcher's reconstruction and representation of them (de Vos et al., 2012). According to Lincoln and Guba (1995:216), credibility in the study will be ensured by the following:

Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to the investment of sufficient time during data collection to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under the study, thereby enhancing credibility.

The researcher consulted participants to secure appointments for the interviews and the conversation that started when the researcher was making appointments led to some of the research questions. The researcher visited the participants for interviews and after the interviews, the researcher went back to the participants to check if they could provide more information about the study. The researcher was not in a hurry to finish the interviews, so he allowed the participants to speak freely and to take their time in answering the research questions.

Persistent observation

Persistent observation refers to the researcher's focus on the aspects of a situation that is relevant to the phenomenon being studied. The researcher observed the participants as they were being interviewed, probed for clarity on issues raised by participants and focused on elements that were most relevant to the problem. The researcher observed the behaviour and what was the participants were doing during the whole interview, in some cases, the researcher also observed when the participants were demonstrating how they conduct the diagnosis and when they were explaining the different herbal medicines that they usually prescribe to the client. Some of the interviews were done in the participants' shrine which enabled the researcher to observe how the participants conduct themselves in the shrine (See Figure 3).

Member checking

In member checking, the researcher provides feedback to study participants about the emerging interpretations and obtains their realities. Even though it wasn't easy to find participants at their homes, the researcher managed to go back to his participants and explained the findings or the interpretation of what they had given the researcher as data and almost all the participants were very excited about what the researcher did.

3.8.2 Transferability

According to de Vos et al. (2012, p.420), here the researcher asks whether the findings of the researcher can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another. Transferability refers you are interested in. But not telling those means that you have taken away their right not to participate (Collin, 2011:32).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Participants were informed about the usefulness and relevance of the study before the interview. The nature and the aim of the study was explained to the participants and it was done to ensure that participants understood the information and voluntarily participated in the study by signing the consent forms (See Appendix 2 and 3).

3.9.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the ethical protection for those who are studied by holding research data in confidence or keeping them secret from the public, not releasing information in a way that permits linking specific individual to a specific response (Lawrence, 2011).

To ensure confidentiality, the recorded interview, the camera used in the interview and the interpreted data were made available to the researcher and the supervisors except for one instance in which the participant wanted the researcher to disclose the activity that she engaged with the researcher, such activity is portrayed in the picture in which the participant was with the researcher in her shrine during interview. The picture illustrates her traditional bones and the herbal medicine she uses. The participant gave consent to the researcher to do so, that's is why some of the picture were shown in (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4).

3.9.3 Anonymity

According to Lawrence (2011: 152), anonymity means that people remain anonymous or nameless, for example, a field researcher provides a social picture of a particular individual but uses a fictitious name and location of the individual and alters some characteristics.

The standard of anonymity was upheld by ensuring that the identities of the participants were not disclosed. In the process of data analysis, the term “participants” was used to ensure that the participants’ identities remain anonymous. The researcher did not even mention the name of other participants to the next participant, this was done to ensure that the identities of the participants remain unknown. For example, in one of the interviews, the participant started the conversation by asking why the researcher chose him to participate in the study and who told the researcher that the participant was relevant to what the researcher was looking for. Even though the researcher knew the person by name and that the person was close to the

participant who asked the questions, the participant didn't mention any name. By so doing, the researcher was ensuring anonymity.

3.9.4 Dissemination of Research Finding

The copies of the research report will be distributed to the supervisors and made available to the library at the University of Venda to be used as references for further studies related to the topic. The research findings will also be presented to the research participants.

The study report will also be submitted to the Department of Health (provincial and district), Traditional Healers' Organization for Africa, the Medicines Practice of South Africa as well as presented at conferences and published in accredited journals for referrals.

3.10 PILOT TESTING

According to Bless et al. (2006:160), pilot testing involves the actual program on a small sample taken from the community from where the program is planned. Terreblanche et al. (2006:94) define pilot testing as preliminary studies on a small group of sample that help to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the researcher instrument. As a researcher, pilot testing was conducted because of the need to assure that the instrument chosen to formulate the question was related to what the research was aiming and directing to find out from the participants. The researcher interviewed five traditional healers from Vhembe district, aged 50 to 80 years, and those traditional healers knew all about traditional healing modalities, especially when it comes to mental illness.

3. 11 ENTRY NEGOTIATION

A week before the interviews started, it was important to travel to the villages selected for the study and solicit for permission from the chiefs because in African communities, they are the ones who are responsible for everything that happens to that particular village. After the initial entry, meetings were held with chiefs who granted permission as they were all interested in the studied phenomena, they then allowed for contact with the traditional healers to conduct the research. The next step involved going to traditional healers to request for their permission. After they had agreed to participate in the study, arrangements were made regarding the schedule and venue for interviews. The traditional healers were requested to provide their contact numbers so that they could be remind of the interview dates because traditional healers are people who are always occupied with one thing or another, so reminding them was extremely beneficial.

3.12 CONCLUSION

The chapter introduced the research design and methods that the researcher used when conducting the research or when collecting data for the study. It detailed why the researcher chosen particular methods for the study and how those methods were applied throughout the whole study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the results from the recorded interviews were analyzed and discussed. Pseudo name were given to participants for ethical purpose. In case where pictures were shown, such as pictures showing traditional bones, herbal medicines and that of researcher with a participant in the field, were shown with the consent of the participant. Thematic method of analysis was used to analyze the data. Common responses from participants were used to develop themes and sub-themes. The following themes are discussed in this chapter: traditional healing is still widely used by people of all ages, traditional healers use different ways to diagnose their mental ill patients, healing modalities in treating mental illness, and methods mostly used in the prevention of mental illness. The chapter also covers the following sub-themes: community members consult more on traditional healing for mental illness, traditional bone throwing and dream analysis as diagnostic methods, steaming and herbal medicines, preventing mental illness from a new born baby, preventing mental illness from an adult and communication with the ancestors.

Table 1 Profile of participants

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE
Nyamukamadi Mukwevho	Female	75
John Khadziandi	Male	68
Elisa Mutshekwana	Female	68
Maria Dombo	Female	70
Dongola William	Male	69

A sample of 5 traditional healers was selected using purposive sampling. Participants of the study were all traditional healers who have been practicing as traditional healers for a number of years. The participants' ages ranged from 45 to 80 years and all of the participants were Venda's speaking people. Two participants were male and three were females and they were all illiterate.

4.2 PARTICIPANT CASES

Mukwevho Nyamukadi

Vho-Nyamukamadi is 75 years old and indicated that she knew she had calling many years prior to initiation, but could not be initiated immediately as she was raising 6 children.

“Raising these children took a lot of my time. Instead of focusing on my calling as a traditional healer, I was looking after my children, but that didn’t prevent me from practicing what my ancestors wanted me to.”

Vho- Nyamukamadi has been a traditional healer for about 7 years now. She treats different kinds of illness, including mental illness. *Vho- Nyamukamadi* told me that a lot of people are still ashamed of being associated with mental health because in most communities, especially African communities, mental health illness is regarded as something that usually happens as indication that the person suffering from it is not doing good things to the society and that the person suffering from mental illness is said to be bewitched because what their doings to members of the other family. It is also thought to be the result of communication from their ancestors signaling to them that they should undergo certain ceremonies for them to be well again. Those are some of the reasons that prompt most of the people not to want to be associated with the mental health issues or mental illness person. And she says that it is difficult for most people to say that they are consulting in connection with mental illness until she diagnoses it and tells them their reason of consulting. When it comes to the issue of consulting, she explained to me that those who usually consult her are usually accompanied by their parents or adults if they are under age or young whereas adult patient are usually accompanied by a family member. According to *Vho-Nyamukamadi*, patients of different group ages usually consult her for such illness. She pointed out that it is very uncommon for the patients to consult without being accompanied by someone and if it does happen, it raises suspicion to traditional healers if indeed the person is really suffering from mental illness.

“Often mental illness patients are accompanied by a family member, besides that, we all know that in African traditional healing, family members are also included with regard to the treatment and prevention process”.

At the beginning of the interview, *Vho- Nyamukamadi* explained that just by looking after all those years that she was practicing as traditional healer, traditional healing modalities encompass the processes in which both the traditional healer and the patient have to go through in order to have a healthy human body which

is free from any illness. She pointed out that in traditional healing modalities, the body, the soul and the spirit can also be healed, meaning that traditional healing modalities heal the person holistically.

As the interview was unfolding, she revealed that most people regard traditional healing modalities as incompetent, especially in connection with the provision of mental illness which is also regarded by traditional healers as an opinion and not a fact. Maybe people say such things because they consider traditional healers as not well trained as they do not undergo any formal training in order to perform such healing as it is a calling to be a traditional healer. She says she remembers very well all those years when she had been a traditional healer until that she treated a lot of people who consult her concerning their mental illness status who are all now well and healthy and bears testimony on how effective the traditional healing modalities are in connection with mental illness.

Thereafter, she explained the meaning or her understanding mental illness. She has this to say with regard to how traditional healers view or understand what mental illness is.

“Traditional healing is a process that is administered by me as traditional healer, and to explain what mental illness is? Well I can say it a communication between the ancestors, the person who is suffering from it and traditional healer. The communication may come as an illness to the patient but to the traditional healer it may come as a dream and in most cases, the dream usually comes true after the patient has consulted. Mental illness is always associated with the following social problem, communication with the ancestors, maybe if the patient has stolen something from someone, people being jealousy of success of others and of cause it can also be attributed to the inheritance from their ancestors”

When the interview was going further, she went on and started explaining some important processes that are regarded as important in the traditional healing modalities, especially when it concerns the treatment of mental illness such as to how the diagnosis methods are conducted. She says to diagnose a mental ill patient, there are always two ways which a traditional healer always uses, either through throwing down traditional bones or dream analysis depending on the preference of the traditional healer and the status of the patient. And below is how she explained how she uses traditional bones and dream analysis to diagnose a mental ill patient.

After communication that happened between the traditional healer and the ancestors through dreams, she would be informed on how, where and which methods to use in treating the person who is about to consult for mental illness. When the patient arrives to consult that’s when she would throw down the traditional bones in order to have an informative communication with the ancestors that will lead her to know how the patient should be treated and how the illness could be prevented from attacking other family members.

As she continued to explain, she also made mention that the traditional bones are the only way that she uses to diagnose the patient. Throwing down the traditional bones means that as the traditional healer she is willing to listen to whatever her ancestors and patient ancestors would want her to do in order to help the patient who is suffering from mental illness. Treatment and prevention always come after she is done with diagnoses through traditional bones throwing.

Vho –Nyamukamadi revealed that as much as mental illness is regarded in traditional healing, it is an illness that will always need a process of healing in a form of traditional healing modalities. She says that after all the processes of diagnosis that are done, the next step that follows in the traditional modalities would always show how the treatment can be done. She further said that treatment is as much as diagnostic and prevention methods. And treatment for mental illness is done in most cases in two ways which are all important in the treatment of mental illness. And those ways are in the form of steaming and using herbal medicines, she emphasized that steaming is a process wherein the traditional healer and the person suffering from mental illness will have to undergo. In this case, she says the role of the traditional healer is to make sure that the steaming process goes well and that that in the process, the patient is the actual person who has to go through such process of steaming. She explained more on what the steaming process in traditional healing modalities entails when treating mental illness.

“Steaming modalities in traditional healing refer to a process wherein the patient will be steamed using hot water and hot stones that are usually mixed with several herbal medicines. When steaming is on course, the patient will be covered with a blanket so that he/she should inhale the herbs that are mixed with hot water. After several sessions, the patient would start to be stable and normal and start to function like any other normal person, but of course with the support of excessive use of herbs that he/she would be given by the traditional healer”.

Vho- Nyamukamadi stated that (in the middle of the interview) that she even use herbal medicines to treat people who consulted her. These herbal medicines are thoroughly administered to the patient with the help she gets from her ancestors, especially with regard to which herbal medicinal plants to use in the treatment of mental illness. She further on indicated “The herbal medicine is collected from the field and prepared intensively at the traditional healer’s home so that it should be ready for use”.

It means that the herbal medicine is always collected when wet and dried by the traditional healer. Traditional healing modalities always include herbs in the treatment modalities. This makes people to visit or consult traditional healers more often because herbs are regarded as cheap and affordable, easy to use and very effective, especially when used correctly by the person suffering from mental illness.



Figure 4 Traditional herbal medicine (wet herbs medicine) used for treatment (Picture taken by researcher on March 24th 2017)

Describing what herbal medicine or herbs are, she stated that herbs always come from trees and not all trees, but specific trees are used for medicinal purposes. And it is the traditional healer's skills to know which tree are useful and which one are not. Participant A had this to say:

“That is why I as a traditional healer need to keep communication with my ancestors on so that they would give me a clue on what type of tree can I use to treat a specific kind of illness such as mental illness”.

Traditional healing modalities, especially the treatment methods cannot be complete without the use of herbal medicine.



Figure 5 Traditional dry and grinded herbs (Picture taken by researcher on February 9th 2017)

Like any other healing system, traditional healing always has its own prevention strategies that are very useful in treating mental illness. The participant stated that besides the fact that there are treatment methods, there are also prevention methods, which are done in order to prevent mental illness from affecting other family members. As we all know, in African society, one can inherit illness from the past generation so, prevention is done to avoid such.

She further explained that prevention strategies in treating mental illness are done in two ways, different modalities are applied to a child and when the person is an adult. Prevention is regarded as important as treatment and diagnosis in traditional healing modalities embodies that prevention should always cover the body, soul and spirit of the person. One would always agree to the fact the prevention methods on the traditional healing, is aimed at preventing mental illness from the individual. A good prevention methods should be applied to both the individual who is not suffering from mental illness and an individual who is still a baby.

“Prevention can only be done when an individual is still a baby, this is done through the stage of initiation to reduce the chances of the child from contaminating diseases that include mental illness, and as for adults; different herbal medicinal plants are basically used to prevent mental illness”.

The participant maintains that prevention can be done to a baby as soon as the family or the parents of the baby decide to conduct a ritual or to initiate their new born baby into the family, that's where traditional healers would also include their modalities which consist of mixing several herbal medicine. That ritual or initiation is called *Muthuso*. In *Muthuso* initiation, the traditional healer would be protecting the baby from illness that could affect the baby, the illness could be a contagious illness or illness that can be inherited from one generation to another. Even mental illness is regarded as one the illness that is prevented when the traditional healer is conducting such initiation to the baby and this is done with the consent of the parents and the family members.

Prevention is also done to adults, but prevention modalities will differ from the ones used for babies. For adults, she said she uses a whole lot of different combination of several herbal medicine. Some of those herbs are prepared for one to eat them, or bath with them.

John Khadziandi

Vho- Khadziandi is 68 years old. He indicated that for one to be a traditional healer, one must have the ability to communicate with the spirit world through the ancestors. The communication can usually come in as a dream or as a sickness, in other words *Vho- Khadziandi* is saying there are different ways in which the ancestors can communicate with the living individual.

“There was a time when I was very sick, if I am not mistaken, I was around 22 years old. My parents took me to the traditional healer, by then I was not sure what of the reason for taking me there. The only thing that I remember was when the traditional healer told my parents that my sickness was caused because my ancestors were communicating to me. The communication was that I should go for initiation to be a traditional healer, from there, the rest is history and I am now a traditional healer”

He has been practicing as a traditional healer for about 10 years and in all those years that he was practicing, as a traditional healers, the healing was influenced by the connection he always had with his ancestors. In those years that he was practicing as traditional healer, he has treated a variety of illness which include mental illness. He also knows and understands that traditional healing modalities with regard to mental illness do not only focus on the mental health of the patient, but also on the whole human being, for example, they treat both the body, the soul and the spirit. He believes that the study is a great opportunity for him to expose the traditional healing modalities in a good way, especially with regard to the provision of mental illness.

Traditional healing modalities refer to the way in which the traditional healers use herbal medicines when treating a variety of illness. But the different modalities of traditional healing differ as it always depends

on what the individual is suffering from. The traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness would always start with the diagnosis like when one is suffering from any disease followed by the treatment which includes a variety of ceremonies if the traditional healers regards the condition of the individual as needing a ceremony to be conducted, then obviously, the issue of prevention would always emerge in the traditional healing modalities. In other setups, the traditional healing starts with the diagnosis and end with the petition, but in between the diagnosis and the prevention, there are lots of processes that must be undergone by both the traditional healer and the person who suffering from mental illness.

According to *Vho-Khadziandi*, traditional healing back then was regarded as a secretive way of healing found mostly in the African communities. He believes that for one to be a traditional healer, one needs to have a calling from their ancestors in order to practice the traditional healing. When it comes to their modalities of traditional healing in the provision of mental illness, participant A's response with regard to the statement is as follows:

“Most of the people in African society and abroad usually visit us as traditional healers in connection with different illness. People do so because they know and understand that traditional healing is effective, especially when it comes to modalities in treating mental illness”.

Modalities of traditional healing include the ways in which traditional healers practice what had been communicated to them by the ancestors in order to help the individual who is sick. *Vho- Khadziandi* pointed out that one of the reasons why people often visit traditional healers for traditional healing is that the modalities of traditional healing heal the body, the soul and the spirit altogether. And by the body, it means the traditional healer could also focus on the impact that the sickness has on the physical part of the individual.

When it comes to the diagnostic system used by traditional healers, there are two ways: either through the traditional bone throwing or dream analysis. But it all starts with the communication between the ancestors and the traditional healer, the communication will definitely lead to the point wherein the traditional healer will know and understand what to do, especially when it comes to the diagnostic part in traditional healing.

“Before I even start with the diagnosis, I will firstly have good communication with my ancestors, they usually tell me what will happen next day and that include even telling me who will consult me the following day”

Then, it is very critical that as a traditional healer I listen carefully to what the communique is all about and mostly it is through dreams. And in most cases, the communication will lead to the traditional healer in using the traditional bones to diagnose the individual who is suffering. Traditional bone throwing is

regarded as one of the critical stages that needs to be undergone by each and every traditional healer in traditional healing because after the throwing of traditional bones, the traditional healer will have a clear indication of what the traditional healer has to do next in connection with healing of body, soul and spirit of the individual.



Figure 6 Traditional bones used in diagnosis process (Picture taken on March 24th 2017)

Khadziandi indicated that there is a wide variety of treatment methods in the traditional healing process and that the traditional healing modalities can take a long and fruitful journey to enhance the wellness of the person who is suffering from mental illness. These various forms of treatment also depend on the seriousness of the sickness and how critical the patient's needs the attention from the traditional healers. In most cases, traditional healers use herbs as medicine and herbal medicine from plants as treatment, but this herbal medicine has to go through different stages before it can be given to the patients by the traditional healer. For example, the traditional healer would collect the herbs from the mountains or from the river secretly and are usually put on the floor in their home until they are dry.

Dry and wet medicine have different effects on the treatment because the traditional healers are different and that they treat different illnesses such as mental illness differently. But the most important thing is that the traditional healers always use herbs in treating illnesses.

The researcher's conversation with Vho- Khadziandi revealed that the prevention strategies that she uses in the provision of mental illness.

“Prevention can only be done when an individual is still a baby, this is done through the stage of initiation to reduce to chances of the child in contaminating diseases that include mental illness and as for the adults, and different herbal medicinal plants are basically used to prevent the mental illness”.

Prevention is regarded as important as treatment and diagnoses in a traditional healing modalities because it covers the body, soul and spirit of the person. A good prevention method should be applied to both the individual who is already suffering from mental illness and from an individual who is still a baby. Different prevention methods are always applied differently with regard to specific cases.

Elisa Mutshekwana

The participant indicated that for someone to be a traditional healer, one should receive a calling from the ancestors. A calling is regarded as a form of communication that one has with one's ancestors. She says that it is not just a matter of being traditional healer, but it is very crucial that in the process of being traditional healer, some sort of communication must confirm that indeed one is being called to be a traditional healer.

“ I wouldn't say to be a healer is difficult or is an interesting thing, like I said before it is a calling, meaning that in a calling that always has to start with communication that I will be having with my ancestors”.

Vho-Elisa is 68 years old, and has been practicing as a healer for about 10 years now. In all those years that she has been a traditional healer, she has been healing people with mental illness through the power that are invested in her by the ancestors. And she said she didn't have any challenges with regard to how to conducting diagnoses to patients of mental illness and offering treatment and prevention strategies.. For the years that she has been a healer (10 years), she had spent two years being initiated as a traditional healer to foster good communication with their ancestors.

“For the whole 2 years, I stayed with the healer who was performing all the process of initiation. The process of training was very fruitful even though sometimes it was very hard for me as a person”

Elisa also emphasised that during the first year as a traditional trainee, she neither allowed to visit or to be visited by people from home. The point of doing that was to make sure that she became separated from the physical world to enable her to communicate with the spirit world because in the physical world and spirit world are two different worlds and have different meanings to the living individual in traditional healing.

The spirit world is where communication between the healer and ancestors happens while the physical world is where the traditional healers start to implement what was communicated to them by ancestors from the communication that they had. After the training, she started to fully practice as a traditional healer and treating a variety of illnesses.

People from different cultures always visited her for consultations after knowing she had completed initiation as a healer. They consulted for various illnesses that include mental illness. People of different ages came from different spheres of life to consult her, especially people who came from very far. The young ones always consult her for prevention purposes while adults always consult for treatment of mental illness.

“Both the young and old consult for either treatment or prevention of mental illness, and it depends on the age of the patient whether to give treatment or prevention”

When it comes to traditional healing modalities with regard to mental illness, she pointed out that different traditional healing modalities vary from traditional healer to traditional healer depending on the kind of healer and the type of illness the healer is trying to heal. But for mental illness, the modalities are the same.

Traditional healing modalities can be explained as a way in which there are different processes that need to be followed. These modalities start with the diagnoses, the treatment and prevention methods of the illness. The entire process is done by a traditional healer.

Mental illness, according to Elisa, is caused by bad communication from the ancestors that usually occurs and when the person who is suffering from such illness is leading a bad life to the society. Mental illness is regarded as conditions that are imposed by the ancestors when they are communicating something to the person who is ill. In other words, mental illness can also be communication of some sort in which the individual who is ill will have to know and understand what might be wrong with their health.

To diagnose mental illness, traditional bones and in some instances, dreams are mostly used to diagnose if there is a connection between the traditional healer and their dreams in diagnosing. Traditional bones plays a major role in the traditional healing modalities, especially when it comes to the diagnosis of illness. Diagnosing forms of the modalities of healing are used the traditional healers to detect what is actually troubling the patient. Diagnosis is regarded as a way in which the traditional healer will have to convey the message that was communicated to them by ancestors through dreams. The message is usually in connection with the illness of that particular individual.

The diagnosis will also cover or discover the kind of treatment that the traditional healer can use to treat the person who is suffering from mental illness. It is in this regard that the traditional healer should always

adhere to the diagnosis before they even start to give treatment to their patient to avoid the situation in which wrong treatment is given to a particular individual.

Treatment is usually administered to treat what is troubling the patient. Elisa maintains that when treating a mentally ill person, there are always a variety of ways of doing such depending on the status that the person who is ill. In most cases, treatment usually occurs in two ways: the use of herbs or the process of steaming. The use of herbs is also done in two or more ways, the traditional healer can prepare some herbal medicines in which some of them might be dry or wet. They are either mixed with something for them to eat or drink.

Some of those herbs are mixed with boiled water to be used for steaming. The process of steaming involves the boiling of water mixed those herbs, then the traditional healer would cover the patient with a blanket to enable them inhale the steam of the mixture. It really takes time for the healer to administer the steaming modalities of healing to the patient. It needs patience from both the traditional healer and the patient as the steaming process can last more than a week depending on the seriousness of the illness.

Prevention is also important in the traditional healing modalities of illness. Prevention methods are also regarded as important in the whole process of healing. When a person consults the healer for prevention, that person is already saying he/she understand that there might be a problem in the near future regarding illness. Prevention occurs in two stages, either when the person is still a baby or when the person is an adult. When prevention is done for a baby, it is done when the ritual called *Muthuso*. The traditional healer responsible for such ritual will ensure that he/she also includes the prevention of all illnesses that might affect the baby when growing up, and those illnesses also include mental illness. The entire process is done with the consent of the parents.

The participant indicated that it is very different to the prevent mental illness when a person is an adult. For the adults, the healer will use well prepared herbs that are effective in the prevention stages. It is well a known fact that in the prevention methods adopted by traditional healers, herbal medicine are used in the process.

“I have been using herbal medicines in the prevention of illnesses for sometimes, and they have never disappointed me”.

Dombo Maria

Maria Dombo is a 70 years old woman who explained that some people thought that to be a traditional healer who can treat a variety of illnesses is similar to being a modern doctor who specializes on a specific type of sickness, but it turns out to be a process for traditional healer.

Besides that, she is not comparing traditional healing with any other form healing around the world. She avers that in the process of healing, traditional healers usually have some sort of communication with their ancestors to guide them on how to go about treating the patient instead of going to a formal school to gain such knowledge. In other words, she was saying that traditional healers find it hard to operate or help people if there is no such communication with the ancestors.

“To be a traditional healer is a process wherein the traditional healer has to know and understand what their ancestors would be saying before doing anything, starting from diagnoses, treatment and prevention, so all the necessary diagnosis and healing information comes from their ancestors, so it is a process in a way”.

As much as she has been a traditional healer for about 8 years, she pointed out that she had an experience of treating people who come to consult for mental illness. Maria also explained that in all those years as a traditional healer treating mental illness, she had never seen her traditional healing modalities failing. In other words, she is emphasizing the point that traditional healing modalities are very effective in treating illnesses, especially mental illness. Most of the people around the world, especially in African society, always believe that mental illness patients can only be treated by traditional healers because modern healing is only able to subdue mental illness for short period of time only. Traditional healing treatment for the mentally ill is very different from treating normal illnesses such as wounds or any type of illness. She explained that in the process of treating a mentally ill person, the traditional healer will have to be in continuous consultation with the patient and in other cases, the patient would relocate from where they stay to the traditional healer’s home depending on how serious the state of the patient is. This shows that indeed, the treatment of mental illness is a process.

“I used to admit people who consult me for mental illness, especially those who are brought by their family members because in most cases, they would be so violent at home in such a way that they will be in need of intensive care”.

The participant indicated that traditional healing modalities start as soon as the traditional healer has dreams that show him/her how to treat the person who is sick starting from diagnosis, treatment to prevention. In other words, the traditional healing modalities operate until the person is completely well. And again, in the traditional healing modalities, things such as herbal medicinal plants are mostly used in the treatment of mental illness. People turn to the traditional healer for this modalities for different reasons. For example to heal the body, the soul and the mind. When the body is healed, the person would start to be physically stable and not be violent, after that, the soul and the mind would be at ease because good communication with the ancestors would have made it possible for the soul to be at ease.

As soon as we were in the middle of the interview, Maria gave different views of mental illness according to her as a traditional healer. She pointed out that people in the society are so judgmental to people who are suffering from mental ill as most people regard mental illness as a form punishment for someone who has done some wrong in the society. For example, if a person steals something from their neighbors, the neighbors can mix some concoctions to make a person who stole from them mentally ill. But according to her she view, mental illness is a way in which the ancestors are attempting to communicate with the sufferer. And in that communication, they could be advising the sufferer to undergo a process of being a traditional healer. This is so because in most instances, those who are found to be mental ill usually become traditional healers after they have been healed by traditional healers. So, it is in view of this mental illness should not only be regarded as a sickness, but as a form of communication with the ancestors.

“Mental illness is not as bad as people view it, even though we know that a mentally ill person may tend to be violent, but good communication with their ancestors could also emerge from such an illness”.

The participant indicated that in dealing with mental illness, traditional healers always follow certain processes of traditional healing modalities. The first process is diagnosis of mental illness which starts with communication that the traditional healer would have with the ancestors through dreams which reveal the exact time on which the patient would consult the traditional healer for mental illness. As soon as the patient arrives, the traditional healer throws down their traditional bones as a way of diagnosis and as way of confirming the communication that he/she had with their ancestors in the dream. Throwing down of traditional bones is the most common way in used in diagnosis. The participant indicated one cannot separate dreams from throwing of bones in the diagnosis in the traditional healing modalities, especially when treating mental illness patient.

“I rely on both my dreams and traditional bones as tools to diagnose a mentally ill patient. I don’t usually look down upon the dreams that I have because it might be a form of communication of what to do next”

A good diagnosis will always aid a traditional healer to give appropriate treatment for the patient. As a traditional healer, treating a patient will always come just after the diagnosis. Traditional healing modalities treatment for mental illness are done pursuant to the communication between the healer and the ancestors. Most people regard treatment as just a way of way of giving the medicine to the individual who is mentally ill, but that’s not what treatment is all about.

“Treatment is way of saying as a traditional healer, yes I had communication with my ancestors and I am giving you this medication because I have been told to do so and I have been shown your sickness through dreams and this is what is going cure your illness”

There are always two ways of treating a mental patient, either by using herbal medicine or using steaming modalities as a way of healing. But the effectiveness of using either herbal medicines or steaming depends on the traditional healer who is treating the patient to decide on the modalities that he/she prefers the most. Herbal medicine are usually gathered by traditional healer from the mountains or rivers. It is not all the trees that can produce medicines, it depends on what the traditional healer is looking for. After gathering all the herbs from the field, the healer will dry them prior to using them. There will be some that will be dried and those that will remain wet to serve the same purpose of treating patients. It is also regarded that the traditional healers are very secretive in the sense that even if they know the medicine, they won't share it with anybody without that person consulting for such, maybe that's why most people would prefer to go to traditional healers for the treatment of mental illness and one of the reasons would be that the information that the traditional healer had treated so and so using which kind of herbs won't be discussed by the traditional healer to anybody.

When it comes to steaming modalities as a way of treating a mental illness, Maria started by explaining the steaming process in traditional healing.

"I have been practicing as a healer for a long time now, and in all those years that I have been helping people, I only knew steaming as a process in which the traditional healer will boil the water, and the water will be mixed with herbal medicine. And that the person who is sick will have to cover him/herself with the blanket in the steaming in order to inhale that moisture that will come out of such steaming".

The traditional healer is the only person that will recommend if it is suitable to use steaming in the treatment of mental illness depending on the nature or status of the individual. But in most cases, if the person who is mentally ill is very violent, the healer usually uses the steaming process. It is said that it is an effective way in treating critical cases of illness such as when the person is very violent, not saying that those other ones are not effective, but depending on the condition of the patient, steaming is regarded as the most appropriate treatment for treating a violent mentally ill patient. Steaming does not happen in the patient's home, but in the traditional healer's home. This is done in the traditional healers' home to enable the traditional healer to oversee if the process of steaming is helping the patient to be better or not. It can happen that the healer would admit the mentally ill patient for as long as 3 weeks depending on how fast he/she is responding to the treatment. For the first week after the patient has been admitted for such treatment, steaming will be done twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. And after a week, then the steaming will be done only in the evening and that also depends on the response of such treatment by the patient.

After the diagnosis and the treatment, some community members would consult the traditional healer for prevention of the illness. And according to Maria, prevention can be done for young babies because most

people are afraid that their new born babies could in some way be effected by mental illness. And people with a history of having family member who is mental ill prefer to consult traditional healers for the prevention of mental illness to the baby. Prevention of mental illness for the babies is done during the initiation rituals of introducing the baby to the ancestors, that's where the traditional healer would also mix their medicine in the prevention of such. Anyway, in the Venda culture, that process of initiation rituals called *Muthuso* and the ritual is done to make sure that the child is well introduced to his/her ancestors and to prevent any sickness that might affect the child including mental illness.

In case when the person is an adult, prevention is done by using different herbal medicines that are always prepared by the traditional healer which are different from the ones for treatment. The healer would prefer using herbs that are usually mixed with soft porridge to be eaten in the morning, as well as the herbs to be mixed with water for bathing twice a day, that is, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Dongola William

William is 69 years old and he never went to any formal school. He was never underwent initiation as a traditional healer. Everything started in a dream for him to be traditional healer and the dream was so specific in such a way that he ended up being having an experience in treating mental illness.

“It was very late afternoon when I was fast asleep when I had a vision in which I was shown a particular tree that could be useful for treatment for mental illness. I was shown another person from a near village who is suffering from mental illness and also the herbs that I had to use were very visible to me”

The case of Vho-William is one of its own kind because he became a traditional healer at the age 50 years. And now he is 69 years old, which means that he has been a traditional healer for about 19 years now. The way in which he became a traditional healer is different as it came to him in a form of dream, that it is why one would say this case it is one its own kind. He only specializes in treating people with mental illness. His knowledge and wisdom to treat mental illness were given to him by the ancestors in the form of a dream. The only people who consult him are the ones suffering from mental illness.

Consultation to the participant is done by people of all ages. Those who are young, according the traditional healing process, are not allowed to consult alone, they have to be accompanied the elders. Adults can always consult on their own, usually accompanied by family members. It is recommended that in treating mental illness in an African society, the diagnosis, treatment and the prevention must involve both the patient and the family members. Family members in this regard are needed to be the eye witness of the whole process lest some people may say that when the person consulted, he or she was much better and became worse

after consultation. The family members are involved so that they can testify the state of the patient prior to and after consultation with the traditional healer.

If someone is called a specialty in a particular field, it means that he/she knows the important issues pertaining to that particular field. Vho-William is well-known for the treatment of mental illness by the society and he seems to enjoy it when consulted by people who are suffering from mental illness. At the beginning of the interview, Vho- William explained that just by looking after all those years that he has been practicing as a traditional healer, he holds that working as traditional healer needs someone who is very disciplined because they deal with confidential issues that must stay between the traditional healer, the patient and the family members.

The participant view traditional healing modalities as a process in which both the traditional healer and the patient had to go through together in order for the patient to have a healthy life. This modalities always start with the diagnosis, treatment and end up with prevention methods. Lots of commitment are needed from both the healer and the patient in the traditional healing modalities. Vho- William said that he had never seen this modalities failing in those years that he had been a healer.

Mental illness results to a state in which the patient loses touch with what is going on around the world, in most cases, when a person is mentally ill he/she becomes lost and confused. It does not only affect the person who is sick, but also those around him, like friends and family members. Special care is needed for those that are suffering from mental illness. But in most communities, people regard mental illness as a state of madness, some even go further by saying that the person who is sick is mad. As a traditional healer, William argues that it is not pleasant for someone to call a mentally ill patient a mad person as it is only their mental conditions which is not stable.

“Mental illness is not what people regard it as it is, why we have the mad people, while we know that they are in a state where in after the treatment they would be much better”.

The diagnosis of mental illness is done by the traditional healer through their traditional bones, these traditional bones are the ones that have been given to him in the dream by the ancestors in order for him to use as diagnosis tools in his practices as a traditional healer. William said he was asleep when he had a dream where he was told to go the nearest river early in the morning the following day. It was a little of a surprise as by then, he had not fully started practicing as a traditional healer. But he did what he was told to do in the dream. Just after he arrived at the river, he saw a black plastic bag which contained traditional bones that he now uses to diagnose patients.

“I didn’t even struggle to get the traditional bones for practice, I was just told to go to the river go fetch them (traditional bones)”.

Communication always seems to be the starting point of every process in the traditional healing modalities. Good communication leads to good treatment methods. Communication is a two way conversation that happens between the receiver and the sender and in this communication, the sender is the ancestors and the receiver is the traditional healer, then the receiver will share what he got to the third person who in this case is the mental ill patient.

After the process of diagnosis, different treatment is followed in the process of healing depending on the diagnosis that the traditional healer had done. But it is always important that the treatment of mental illness will always include the use of herbal medicines and the inhaling of herbs through the steaming process. From the experiences that the healer had for those years, he says that treatment applied to mental ill patient helps them and also deals with all the causes of such illness. Traditional bones can assist in the diagnosis, but the traditional herbs medicine are mostly used in the treatment.

Herbal medicine is used in two forms, one as a medicine that is mixed with soft porridge and this herbal medicine is prepared thoroughly by the traditional healer himself and is given to the patient with the directions to use by the healer. It is collected in the field which is not nearer to the villages, but it is usually collected very far, in most cases from the mountains. After the collection of such herbs, the healer would have to ensure that the herbs are categorized in such a way that they would know which one is to be given to the person who is in a particular state or condition because different conditions deserve specific attention, especially when it comes to treatment.

Steaming is also a process in which the traditional healer would prepare hot water and mix it with different herbs in order to make the steaming very effective in dealing with mental illness. The mixing of hot water and herbs takes place for about 5-10 minutes. The patient is supposed to be covered by the blanket for some time while inhaling the herbs that are mixed with hot water. That process is called steaming and it is regarded as effective in the treatment of mental illness, most patient prefer the process of steaming. They maintain that even though it is very painful to undergo, it is very helpful. Depending on the status and the response of the patient to steaming, steaming can even last for about 2 weeks. If the patient is in a critical stage, he/she can be steamed 2 times per day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Every stage of traditional healing is a process including the prevention methods. The prevention methods are performed for both babies and adults. For babies, prevention is done through the ritual process in which the traditional healer mixes his herbs to prevent any harmful effect that can happen to the baby when he/she is still young. But when it come to the adults, prevention is done through the use of herbal medicine prepared

by the traditional healer and this herbal medicines are either for bathing or are administered though eating to serve the same purpose which is to prevent mental illness.

Table 2 Emerging themes and sub-themes

Emerging Themes	Sub-Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional healing is widely used by people of all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members consult more on traditional healing for mental illness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional healing uses different ways to diagnose their mental ill patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional bone and • Dream analysis as a diagnostic methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing modalities in treating mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steaming modalities • Herbal medicine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly used method in the prevention of mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing mental illness from babies • Preventing mental illness from adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with the ancestors that leads to a process of traditional healing 	

TRADITIONAL HEALING IS WIDELY USED BY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

The literature reviewed together with the information that was shared in Chapter One indicates that traditional healing is widely used in African communities and the entire world by people of all ages. In African communities, children are not allowed to consult traditional healers on their own, but have to be accompanied by adults.

This case study “traditional healing is widely used by people of all ages” gives us more information that indeed, traditional healing is still used for a variety of illnesses in most communities. Back then, most people who could not afford to consult western practices consulted traditional healers. Nowadays, people can afford to consult western medical doctors, but a large number of them still choose to consult traditional healers for various illnesses. The fact that traditional healers are easy to find in the community is one of the reasons and that their medication are easy to access could account for the preference. All these facts make traditional healing to be the mostly used form of treatment by people of all ages.

As I was collecting data in the field, it dawned to me that that it wasn’t easy to get the participants as traditional healers are people who are hard to find due to their busy schedules like assisting clients in their shrine or running errands dictated to them by their ancestors through dreams. When my research assistant

and I (my research assistant was little bit younger than me) were consulting a research participant who is an old woman for interviews, we were welcomed by participant I was surprised when she took us to her shrine where the interview was conducted. On entering, the shrine, she showed us where and how to sit in the shrine, and then she became busy outside the shrine for some few minutes.

By the time she came back to the shrine, my research assistant and I were ready to engage in the conversation that would lead us to ask the research questions, but to my surprise, the participant thought we were there to consult and not to ask questions, she thought that because I look older than my research assistant, maybe I had accompanied her to consult. Nevertheless, we continued with the interview and in the middle of the interview, I asked her why she thought I had accompanied this young girl for consultation, and this is how she responded to that question:

“When you entered that gate, I thought that as young as this girl is, maybe this is his big brother or someone else in the family that has accompanied her for consultation because I know that most cases, young people or children come here accompanied by their parents or by older people.. The other thing that came into my mind was that maybe both of you are here to consult, Man, next time when you come to see me for other things and not for consultation, let me know in time so that I should make appointment for that because look now I thought you were my customers that is why I have welcomed you in my shrine”

The response from the participant made me conclude that indeed, it is not only a particular age group that visits traditional healer for traditional healing, but people of all ages, especially when she said she thought that either I had accompanied her (my research assistant) for consultation or we (my research assistant and I) were there for consultation.

Sub-theme: Community members consult more on traditional healing for mental illness

The majority of people of the studied area visit traditional healers for different kind of diseases which include mental illness, even though some community members do not consult the traditional healers. In an African community, including the study area, traditional healing is regarded as a type of healing that is effective in dealing with a variety of illnesses. For example, while collecting data together with my research assistant, some participants indicated that even those who visit western practices also go to traditional healers for consultation. One of the reasons why most people visit traditional healers for mental illness is that they have very good relationships with their traditional healers and traditional healers are in close proximity as compared to western practitioners. People of all ages and gender seem to suffer from mental illness and this lead them to consul traditional healers. Participants also indicated that their clients comprise people of all classes and gender.

Nigel Gericke's (1996) study of traditional herbal medicines indicated that it is estimated that there are at least 200 000 indigenous healers in South Africa who are consulted by some 60% of the total population of the country. The study also shows that it is generally estimated that 80% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa relies on traditional healers even if many also visit hospitals. In Mozambique, the proportion relying on traditional medicine may be even higher because of poverty, the inaccessibility of biomedical health services, and years of attacks by Renamo on the Governments rural health personnel and infrastructure (Engela, De Kerk & Ransberg, 1996:32)

The participants indicated that different kinds of people and gender consult them for mental illness. The following responses by the participants illustrate this point:

“In most cases different kind of people usually come to me, men, women, old men , old ladies and those young ladies who are married, they are usually accompanied by their mothers in- law”.

“To me, I meet all kinds of people, men, women, but mostly old people”.

“Different kinds of people usual come to me, but most of them are women, men, boys and girls”.

The responses by the participants illustrate that traditional healers are consulted by people of all ages and gender.

WHO (2008) estimates that 80% of people in Africa uses traditional medicinal sector at first. The traditional healers are mainly for consulted for mental problems. The researchers attributes this high patronage to the fact that the treatment is holistic by taking into account the spiritual, physical as well as psychosocial aspects of health. Studying the health seeking behaviour of participants from Burkina Faso, it was found that there is a strong belief that modern methods are deemed good for physical illness, but powerless against supernatural causes. The participants in that study expressed that western medicine alone deals with symptoms to give temporary relief, but not the underlying social and moral problems. That is why in most communities, especially in Africa, tend to go for traditional healing (WHO, 2008:38).

According to White (2017), in traditional healing, the traditional healers regard their healing as a process that heal holistically, this implies that the healing deals with the complete person and provides treatment for physical, psychological(mental issue) spiritual and social symptoms. Traditional healers in the traditional healing do not separate the natural from the spiritual or the physical from the supernatural or the spiritual. This make them not to address the issue of mental health separately from perspectives of the spiritual and physical, and that is why most people in the society really prefer to go for traditional healing treatment (White, 2017:29).

TRADITIONAL HEALERS USE DIFFERENT WAYS TO DIAGNOSE THEIR MENTAL ILL PATIENTS

Expectations will always emerge when one visits traditional healers, one of the expectation is that the traditional healers should know and understand what is troubling the patient. And in the case where a person is suffering from mental illness, the family members will only rely on the diagnosis of the traditional healer. That is why when a family or individual who is visiting a traditional will always have one or two questions about their mental illness condition to find out whether the traditional healer will be able to establish the cause of the illness. This case study will explain more on the diagnoses that are often used by traditional healers in treating mental illness.. Like other practices, traditional healers have their own ways of diagnosing mental ill patients, but all these depends on how the traditional healers operate.

Diagnosis in the traditional healing is very important in the sense that one cannot proceed to treatment and prevention without dictating what could be the cause of the illness, particularly in the context of mental illness as it is regarded as an illness that has to do with spirits. The process of diagnosis in traditional healing is as long as the process of treatment or the process of prevention. It all starts with how the traditional healer would want to help the patient and end up with where and which methods to use to help the patient. The diagnosis also differs from one traditional healer to another depending on how the ancestors have communicated with them.

After having a thorough investigation in the collected data about the diagnosis of mental illness by traditional healers, most of the participants indicated that as an individual, when visiting a traditional healer, one cannot assume or conclude that the healer will use a specific kind of diagnosis because when it comes to mental illness, it is not all about the diagnosis, but also how to help the person after the diagnosis, meaning that different methods can be used by traditional healers to help the patient.

The fact that the focus of the study was on traditional healing modalities in the provision mental illness, participants showed that some modalities used in the traditional healing process are as important as others. In the middle of one of the interviews, I asked how traditional healers diagnose a person who is mentally ill and which strategies are used in diagnoses. A variety of responses emerge from that question. Some of the responses from the participant indicate that there are a variety of ways of diagnoses, but in those variety ways, some are mostly used than others.

“There are different kinds of diagnostic strategies that are used, but I only use traditional bones”.

“Traditional bones are the ones that are used because my ancestors talk to me through dream and traditional bones. So I use both traditional bones and dreams”.

Communication needs to keep going on between the traditional healers and their ancestors in order for them to have clear diagnoses of their mentally ill patients through dreams which are interpreted or analyzed through traditional bones. This means that both traditional bones and dream analysis are used in the diagnostic process of mental illness in the traditional healing process.

Sub-theme 1: Dream analysis as a diagnostic method

In most cases, people of the community wonder how traditional healers diagnose a patient, one of the reasons for raising such questions is prompted by the fact that traditional healers are not well trained to diagnoses like doctors who pursue western practice. So, traditional healers only depend on the dream analysis communicated to them by the ancestors with regard to the sickness of the patient who would be coming for consultation the following day.

So in other words, even though there are so many ways that the traditional healers can use to diagnose their clients, most of the traditional healers rely on dreams to complete their diagnoses.

Diagnosis comprises a combination of information, namely observation, patient self-diagnosis, dream analysis, bone throwing and divination. The treatment success of any traditional healer depends greatly on proper diagnostic methods. And indeed, these are many and varied. But amongst those varied methods, diagnostic dream analysis and bone throwing are widely used and both of these diagnostic measures are considered as ancillary to traditional healing (Engela et al., 1996) Participants' responses illustrate that indeed, dream analysis and traditional bone throwing are well used to diagnose mental illness.

“My child, as a traditional healer, I use traditional bones together with the dreams because sometimes the dream will tell me about the person who is sick even though he/she has not arrived and also the dream can tell me what kind of sickness the person is suffering from”.

Sub-theme 2: Traditional Bone throwing

As much as the traditional healers use dream analysis in their diagnosis, they also use bone throwing. Traditional healers have traditional bones in their shrines which have been given to them by their ancestors. When the person consults the traditional healer, the traditional healer would know that he/she has to throw down the bones to diagnose the problem with the assistance of the ancestors.

“The bones are the ones that I use, my ancestors talk to me through them”.

“There is no traditional healer who doesn't use traditional bones to diagnose, so I also use them to diagnose what is bothering my clients”.

Emphasis was made on the fact that the traditional bones and dream analysis are mostly used in the diagnostic process, one wouldn't talk about traditional healing without making mention of traditional bones and dream analysis, and one couldn't just have them without good communication with their ancestors.

HEALING MODALITIES IN TREATING MENTAL ILLNESS

When individuals consult traditional healers, all they want is to have normal health conditions. In this case, traditional healing modalities are the ones that are most useful in treating illness from the individual. Mental illness can be treated by various healing modalities in the traditional healing process. In traditional healing, every step of the process of healing has to be done in accordance with communication from the ancestors.

These healing modalities are communicated to the healer by the ancestors. The ancestors will inform the traditional healer to administer the most appropriate modalities to be employed depending on the longevity and severity of the illness that that patient is suffering from. And it is most surprising that most of the modalities that you will find the healer using in treating a person who is mental ill, indeed become helpful to the person affected. In another case, one of the participants emphasized the confidentiality and anonymity that traditional healers adhere to when treating different illness and pointed out that he could not reveal the modalities he uses when treating patients. This shows that traditional healers always adhere to strict confidentiality of their patients regardless of the fact that they are not well trained for their practice and that they only depend on the skills and confirmation they got from their ancestors.

Regardless of the fact that one of the participants explained that there are also some modalities that are very important in treating mental illness, not all traditional healers will always use them for treating mental illness. If only the patient could be given chance to choose the modalities they want to follow in their treatment, some of these modalities would not be chosen because of the pain suffered in the process, but their effectiveness could be well endorsed by those who have used them before.

As compared to the other questions that I asked in the interview, the participants were hesitant to the question on the healing modalities in treating mental illness, as they thought it would be the invasion of confidentiality as they did not know that the only thing that I wanted from them was their response on their different healing modalities they use in treating people with mental illness. These responses from some of the participants really indicate that traditional healing has various healing modalities which all lead to the good health of the individual patients.

"I make herbal medicine for drinking and for mixing with soft porridge, as well as herbal medicine mixed with water and used for bathing and steaming".

“Treatment is totally different, some patient I give them herbal medicine to mix with soft porridge which should be eaten in the morning, afternoon and evening. And I even prepare herbal medicine for use during steaming”.

Sub-theme: Steaming modalities

One of the ways that the traditional healers follow in their modalities in treating a mental ill person is steaming modalities. It is said that when an individual is sick, he/she must be steamed in a private place in order to remove all the causes of illness and the illness itself. The process of steaming differs depending on the stage of the illness. During the steaming process, the traditional healers use boiled water, different kinds of traditional medicines that need to be mixed with water and this process can take some time before the medicine works, meaning that if a person is steamed using only water without the required medicines, the process of steaming cannot work. Participants’ responses show that indeed, the traditional healing modalities called steaming are used in treating mental illness:

“There are so many different stages that a client passes through, firstly, the person is diagnosed using traditional bones to find out what is troubling the person, the person is then steamed so that the spirit that is causing the illness should go away, then from there, as a traditional healer, I then give the person different kinds of medicine such as the ones that he will eat, the one that he will bath with, and when I discover that the illness has become worse, I usually admit the person in my home and complete the process”.

“Medicines are the ones that I use, but in most cases, I make medicine for the clients, or I can make a steam so that the person can be steamed using different kinds of medicine”.

“I can use different types of medicine, some of which I prepare for the patient to eat, some I make it for the person to be steamed with depending on the state of the individual”.

From the participants’ point of view, steaming is one of the healing modalities that can be used like other modalities, but steaming is a long process compared to other methods in their modalities as it includes lot of activities before a patient can be steamed by the traditional healer.

Sub-Theme: Herbal Medicine

As in different types of healing, there are some ways that are used in their modalities in traditional healing. Most of the traditional healers use herbal medicine in their modalities in treating mental illness. Herbal medicines are regarded by many traditional healers as an effective way of dealing with a variety of illness, and again, it has been said that there are many ways to prepare these herbal medicine in dealing with mental

illness. Herbal medicine could be prepared for eating, bathing and to be mixed with soft porridge. In most African communities, including the studied area, herbal medicine is well recognized by many traditional healers as one of the modalities that is effective in dealing with mental illness.

In the study by Nigel (1996, P.58), it is said that medical plants are widely used in traditional therapeutics, and it is likely that at least 2 5000 species of herbs are commonly used as medicines that can treat various illness including mental illness (Synman, Hans & Morris, 1996). Participant responses by the participant's illustrate the point:

“There is process of bathing a person with water mixed with herbal medicine, there is also herbal medicine that I pour inside the soft porridge for the person to eat”.

“Yes, I use different herbal medicines that a person can use in different ways such as bathing, ointment, drinking and eating”.

“As a traditional healer, I use herbal medicine I mixed with water, I am usually shown those medicine by my ancestors in the dream, or I take the person and stay with him for a long time, by doing so I will be removing the evil spirits from him”.

The treatment modalities employed by traditional healers are often in line with the traditional belief about the causation of the mental illness and their general aim is to produce or eliminate the cause of the illness rather than targeting the pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment approaches used. Pharmacological methods commonly involve the use of different types and preparations of herbs with varying routes of administration. Potentially, every part of selected plants may be used for herbal remedies and prepared and administered in a myriad of ways such as boiling, pounding, burning and macerating, followed by drinking, inhaling, sniffing, rubbing, smearing and even parental application through skin incisions (Atindanbila, 2000:24).

Relative to the use of herbs and other indigenous medicines, Atindanbila (2000) found that only 2% of the psychiatric patients in hospital uses drugs solely for the treatment for their mental illness. The remaining patients had visited the traditional healer for herbal medicine in addition to hospital drugs.

According to WHO (2008), some countries are locally producing traditional herbal medicine to be used for various diseases such as chronic diseases, liver disorders, amoebic dysentery, constipation, cough, eczema, ulcers, hypertension, diabetes, malaria and mental health in order to improve the access to herbal medicine. Because of the important role that the African herbal medicine has played and is playing in Africa and beyond, some countries and institutions of higher learning have put research into plant medicine and training of traditional medical practitioner as part of their degree programs. For examples in Ghana, Kwame

Nkrumah University of Science and Technology has established the Department of Herbal Medicine in the Faculty of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Ghana University had done the same by establishing the Department of Pharmacology and Herbal Medicine. In order to ensure the quality of traditional herbal medicine, currently in Ghana, some public hospitals have also opened centers for herbal medicines where people can access health care with the backing of traditional healer who specialize in mental illness and the Ministry of Health in Ghana.

Some of the African herbal medicine have been analyzed in modern laboratories and certified to cure certain mental illnesses. African herbs are also being dispensed in liquid, tablet and powder form as well as packed containers. It has been done so to enable traditional healers to easily know which herbal medicine to use for what kind of illness. Although not all African traditional healers are making use of the current scientific approach of preparing their herbal medicines in healing process, there is however, the need for the government, ministries of health and the traditional healers to come into dialogue on how this herbal medicines can be available to hospital as they are effective in treating mental illness (Atindanbila, 2000:35).

METHODS MOSTLY USED IN THE PREVENTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS

The other aspect that the traditional healing offers to the people with mental illness is how their prevention methods works. In most cases, especially when one is living in an African society, prevention is the most important thing to do in case where, there is a blood line of people suffering of the same mental illness in the family, then the elders of the family would usually consult traditional healers to preventing the illness so that it might not continue to affect other family members.

Mental illness in the African society is a sickness that can be transferred from one generation to another. The elders of the family are the ones who should try to do something about it and that's where traditional healing plays a vital role by coming up with prevention methods of the illness, and it also depends on how far the illness has gone. Prevention methods depend on whether the person is still young or is an adult.

It is regarded by the participants that it is better to prevent mental illness than to treat it, because when treating it, traditional healers will now be dealing with something that already exist, but when preventing , they will be dealing with something before it happens or before it starts to operate. Even though there are medicines that can be used for treatment, there are also medicines that can be used in the prevention of mental illness. Participant emphasized that different modalities are applied when one needs to prevent mental illness from child and from adults. When I was doing my fieldwork (collecting data) most of the participants showed the importance of having two different modalities in the preventing process of mental

illness and below are some of the responses by participants that illustrate that different modalities applied for children and for adults.

*“I use a ritual called **Muthuso**, this ritual is done when a child is still a baby to make sure that no disease affects the child, including mental illness”.*

“Prevention also depends on the age of the person, if a person is a baby, a ritual can be done to prevent the illness and if a person is an adult, I use different herbal medicines”.

*“**Muthuso** ritual is the most useful prevention method that I used for children and herbal medicines for adults in preventing mental illness”*

It is our culture, a child is taken to a traditional healer when the child is still a new baby born even though some young mothers may not understand the reasons for the baby to go through the rituals. But the traditional healers know that as long as the child has undergone such rituals, the child will be immune to many other illnesses including mental illness when he/she is growing up. This is done with or without the mother’s consent because the elders know the reason they are doing it. We find out that herbal medicine also plays an important role in the prevention of mental illness in adults like in children.

Sub-theme: Preventing mental illness from a new born baby

Depending on how the parents are aware of mental illness in the family, some of the parents usually consult the traditional healer so that prevention of the illness should be done to the child, and it seems as if there are different ways of prevention with regard to children and adults. In African culture, when a child is born, there are some rituals that need to be performed for the prevention of mental illness. Even though the parents would not be aware of that, but the traditional healers knows that the process includes prevention of mental illness, that is why most parents in African communities usually prefer that the rituals be conducted to their new born babies.

Synman (1996), posits that the Batswana prescribe **Methuso**, to new born babies. The medication is smeared around the nipple of the mother so that the child can ingest it with the breast milk, alternatively, it may be taken by the baby directly through bottle-feeding. The medicine serves different purposes (including mental illness, coughing, kidney problem, and any diseases that can attack the child) (Synman et al., 1996:15). The participants’ responses indeed support the statement:

*“I can because to babies I use medicine that is used in the **Muthuso** that is done when the child is still a baby”.*

*“The only prevention that can be done when the child is still a baby is to take a medicine and mix it with **Muthuso**, that is done so that the child could not be affected by any illness including mental illness”.*

*“As a traditional healer, I use different medicines, medicines that the person can ingest and to bath with, but to children or babies, I use medicine that is mixed with **Muthuso** and **Muthuso** is only done when the child is still a baby”.*

And as for the prevention of mental illness from the young ones, (Danquah, 1982) asserts that the babies are given immunization and ritual by the traditional healer. The rituals are specifically done to the baby when he/she is still very young and is only done with the consent of the parents and family members. And he said this rituals are done in a traditional healer’s home just after a few day when the child is born (Danquah, 1982:46).

Sub-theme: Preventing mental illness from adult

Different methods are applied when one needs to prevent mental illness from an adult as with a child. It seems as if most people who consult traditional healers to get prevention medicine are the ones who are aware that there are several people suffering from the same illness in their families, so they might be afraid that it might also happen to them, then they turn to traditional healers for prevention.

When an individual attains adulthood, they assume responsibility for their own health. Adulthood gives them an opportunity to reconsider the traditional healing approaches that were used by their parents, which is to use different herbal medicines, some of those medicine are used when someone is bathing, eating or maybe drinking. It is said that the individual must always be prepared to deal with such kind of illness such as mental illness by consulting the traditional healers for prevention, so that the traditional healers might perform rituals that have to be strictly adhered to in order for the medicine to be effective in preventing mental illness (Peter & Roy, 1993:41). The following responses by the participants illustrate this point:

“I use different medicines but those medicine have the very same impact, some of the medicines are used for bathing, some are used in the steaming process of the clients, but all of those, I use it when I want to prevent mental illness from individuals”.

“There are no other ways to prevent the illness rather than using lots of medicines, as a traditional healers, I give my clients different kinds of herbal medicines which they have to use for a long time”.

According to Danquah (1982), the patient is made to believe that witchcraft and social problems might be the cause of the mental illness and even those people who envy them might be the cause of the problem. The patient is then taught the avoidance behaviour by giving them herbal medicines some of which they

have to eat, some to drink or bath with. Some traditional healers would also give them charms in a form of herbs as preventive methods to ward off evil spirits and those who want to bewitch them, including enemies (Danquah, 1982:38).

Long before the advent of western medicine, Africans had their own way of dealing with diseases and it worked for them. African traditional healers were intelligent enough to prescribe traditional solutions to diseases or illnesses, whether it had spiritual or physical causes with little or no side effect, then when it was psychological, the person would sometimes be counselled by the traditional healer and that counselling was given necessary attention in view of the fact that African traditional healing is intertwined with cultural and religious beliefs, and it is holistic in nature. It does not only focus on the physical condition, but also on the psychological, spiritual and social aspects of individual, families and communities (Truter, 2007:19).

COMMUNICATION WITH THE ANCESTORS

The communication that the traditional healers have with their ancestors is very crucial in the traditional healing modalities, especially when it comes to the provision of mental illness. The communication starts before the person actually becomes a healer up until he/she becomes a traditional healer. The communication will always have answers of where, how and to whom the diagnoses, the treatment and the prevention methods should be applied to. It is a critical stage wherein as traditional a traditional healer, one will never miss it as the whole process of healing depends on it, that is why in most cases, traditional healers will always have to consult with their ancestors before they conduct any type of communication with a patient. Communication between the traditional healer and their ancestors is inseparable. A healer could not work as traditional healer without having this communication, and this makes it a very important aspect in the traditional healing process, especially in connection with the provision of mental illness.

“Communication is way to start the process of traditional healing. Good communication also covers the whole package of modalities which are the diagnoses, the treatment and the prevention”.

“The dreams I had with my ancestors always brings good results to my patients because I don’t struggle to diagnose and I don’t struggle in giving the treatment because the ancestors would have told me what to do the following day”.

“I had a dream wherein I was told where I should go if I need the herbs to give the mental ill patient who was about to visit the following day, the communication would also inform me of the next coming patient”.

To check if the person is indeed a real traditional healer called by the ancestors, one should just look at their diagnoses, their treatment and their prevention methods. African ancestors communicate with the living

either by possessing the traditional healer or by channeling the messages through thrown bones. The ancestors can also appear to the family member in the dreams, but only the traditional healer can decipher the meaning. Ancestral communication is an ancient and daily practice found in many cultures around the world (Synman et al., 1996:32).

In the process of communication that the traditional healer would have with the ancestors, the spirits or the ancestors use different ways on the specialty of a healer. Some healers hear words spoken in their ears by the ancestors while other see visions in front of them. There are also healers who uses bone to look into the future and talk to ancestors.

Traditional healers believe that there is only one supreme God (Mbiti, 1986). In spite of their view about God, they also believe in the communication with the ancestral spirit, with the belief that they are all intertwined and in constant relationship with the living beings. These ancestral spirits depend on worship and it is said to possess supernatural powers with which they can punish or reward their worshippers (Sarpong, 2002). So, the traditional healers will always have communication with the ancestor in the practice of healing and that communication always happens when the ancestors would want to say something to the traditional healer about the diagnoses or which methods to use in treating the patient. This implies that the ancestors are the healers, but work through the medium of spirits, healers, herbs and those herbs are provided with the assistance of the traditional healers (Obinna, 2012:43).

4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the current study show that indeed, traditional healing is widely used, and that traditional healing uses different modalities in treating mental illness. Participants' responses in the study are compatible with the statement made in the articles written by Engela (1999: 58), when he argues that having different modalities in treating mental illness makes it very easy for traditional healer to know the cause of the illness, which gives the traditional healers ideas on which method they can use in dealing with such kind of illness, most of the traditional healers have realized that they might operate differently, but they all use the very same modalities in diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness. In a study conducted by Setswe (1999: 43), it is pointed out that diagnostic, treatment and prevention methods used by traditional healer may vary in detail from country to country, but the core fundamentals of the treatments are the same worldwide.

Regarding the issue of traditional healing modalities, especially when it comes to diagnostic, the participants would use different ways of diagnosis, and in those diagnoses, it seems all yield the very same results. Different diagnostic strategies differ in the context of how the traditional healers have been

communicated with by their ancestors. Dreams analysis and bone analysis work hand in hand in the diagnostic process. Most of the participants seem to have the same understanding that traditional dream analysis and bone analysis are the most useful methods in diagnosis in most African communities.

When we talk about the dream analysis in the traditional healing, one would be talking about communication between the traditional healer and their ancestors. The ancestors are regarded as the ones who gave out instructions on how the traditional healers would treat the person who has consulted them for any illness. Communication between traditional healer and their ancestors is regarded as way in which the ancestors will be informing the healers on how to work with their patient and in most cases, ancestors communicate with them through dreams, that is why traditional healers do not undermine any dream that they may have, regardless of how big or small the dream might be. There is no other way that the traditional healers would follow expect going through the communication with their ancestors through dream analysis.

After traditional healers have communicated with their ancestors through dreams, they would know when and how to use traditional bones to diagnose the patient who is coming for consultation. In most cases, the traditional healers would have a clue of a person who is going to consult in a dream and then verify it by throwing down bones to find out from the ancestors which herbs can be prescribed for the person. This highlights that dream analysis works hand in hand with the traditional bones. Traditional healers cannot have their dreams diagnose, treat and prevent mental illness without communicating with their ancestors. Again, a traditional healer cannot throw down their traditional bones and expect them to communicate with them without having the communication first with the ancestors through dreams.

The participant of this study also pointed out that dream analysis is a way of communication from the ancestors to the traditional healers. The person who is going to consult them will be shown in the dreams and interpreted through the throwing of the traditional bones to enable the traditional healer to have a clear understanding of the cause of the illness.

This statement is also supported by the study by Holdstock (in Bodibe and Sodi 1997: 183), who pointed out that ancestors play a major role in lives of traditional healers and that indigenous healers are selected by the ancestors before they got to training, then from the training the ancestors communicate with the healers through dreams. Diagnosis in African indigenous healing may be better understood as related to the theories of causation of illness or problems rather than the classification of symptoms. However, this is in accordance with the participants' responses when they indicated that diagnosis is done in various ways, but in all those ways, it starts with the communication between the traditional healers and the ancestors.

One of the significant findings of the study is that there are modalities in the treatment of mental illness, amongst others, steaming is one of the modalities that the participants would use. In most African societies, traditional healers would also use steaming in their traditional healing modalities in treating the mental ill person as most traditional healers consider it is a very effective method in the process of healing. It is believed that mental illness can be caused by spirits that are inserted inside someone's body so that he/she could become sick, maybe that is why most traditional healers would prefer the steaming process because it is said that in African communities, what is inserted in someone's body must be removed through steaming.

The study also revealed that the steaming process can take several days depending on the severity of the illness. Steaming, according to the participants, can be used by the traditional healers to get rid of the spirits that are troubling the person because in African ways, mental illness can also be associated with the spirits that might have entered the human body.

The findings show that herbal medicines are also well known modalities used by the traditional healers. Participants also indicated that herbal medicines are widely used by many traditional healers in treating mental illness in different ways. Some of the herbal medicines are to be drunk, others can be applied in the body as an ointment or mixed with the soft porridge for the sick person to ingest.

One wouldn't discuss traditional healing and not make mention of herbs used in their treatment. In traditional healing, herbs are mostly used form of treatment in an African society. Treatment may vary from different traditional healers, but they all use herbs or herbal medicines in their healing modalities. It would be almost impossible for an individual to consult a traditional healer and not be given some herbs after the diagnosis.

The obtained results show that there are different methods used in the prevention of mental illness. When a child is still a baby, participants indicated that they use different modalities. The participants indicated that they use the ritual called *Muthuso* in the prevention of mental illness to babies. Participant pointed out that they mix different kinds of herbal medicines in the *Muthuso* concoction as a way of preventing mental illness and other illnesses that may affect the baby when growing up.

The findings also show that when it comes to adults, there are also different ways of preventing mental illness. Participant also revealed that there are various modalities that are used in preventing mental illness when it comes to e adults. The findings have revealed that herbal medicines are the most widely used methods in the prevention of mental illness.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Findings of the current study show that there are various traditional healing modalities of mental illness. The various modalities start with the communication between the traditional healers and the ancestors followed by the diagnosis, treatment and prevention method of mental illness. Results also show that different traditional healers in different parts of the community use different traditional modalities in the provision of mental illness.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

From the findings of the study, it is evident that there is a need to explore into the traditional healing modalities when it comes to provision of mental illness. The current study showed that there is still a lot to be done on the topic under research because most people are not aware of the traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness. This chapter provides a conclusion of the whole study, limitations that can be addressed in future studies and the recommendations on addressing the issue of traditional healing modalities.

5.2 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study has discovered some modalities of traditional healing. There are various ways in the process of traditional healing modalities and also different diagnostic methods of mental illness that can be used depending on traditional healer's way of doing things. The attitude of the participant in the current study suggests that traditional healers treat their client's information with confidentiality. Even if the diagnosis, the treatment and the prevention differs, the main aim is to treat the person who is sick and the all the traditional healers get the communication from the ancestors to heal the individual. All the participants also highlighted that they use the very same modalities in prevention of mental illness. Differences might arise when mental illness is prevented from a baby as different processes of rituals that need to be performed may not be the same as that of used when preventing mental illness from an adult. The fact that they all use the very same modalities indicate that traditional healing modalities can be used in treating a variety of illness depending on the kind of illness a person is suffering from, for example, if a person is suffering from mental illness, different traditional healers can use different methods in treating the illness, but the main aim of doing so is to treat the illness.

Literature together with the current study shows that even though the traditional healing modalities take a long process, they have an impact in treating mental illness. The study has shown that various forms of diagnosis, treatment and prevention are used in the provision of mental illness depending on the strategies that the traditional healers might use in treating different people. Different messages maybe passed from one traditional healer to another by the ancestors, but the main reason of the messages is to treat a person who is mentally ill.

5.3 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher used a purposive sampling technique which was based on the purposive judgment to select five participants in the study. All the participants were traditional healers from the studied area and who were regarded by the researcher as custodians of knowledge holders of information related to the topic. The sampling procedures excluded other participants who could have provided useful insights on the phenomenon of interest of this study. However, the study could be used as a basis to future related studies to expand on the experiences of the participants in the study.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To the community and the government as a whole, there is definitely need of support for traditional healers in promoting their traditional healing modalities in treating mental illness. Some people or community members are not aware of the alternative of going to consult a traditional healer when one is suffering from mental illness, therefore recommendations are as follows:

- Awareness programs should be offered to different communities to make them aware of how effective traditional healers could be in treating various illness.
- Traditional healers should also be provided with a platform to collaborate with the Department of Health in providing health services to the community. Results show that even though traditional healers have processes in their modalities, their modalities are active in dealing with mental illness.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter covered the conclusion of the study, limitation and recommendation that can be addressed in future research. Recommendation that were made can be useful because one needs to know and understand traditional modalities before one consults traditional healers for sickness such as mental illness.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

1. What is the profile of the clients who visit traditional healers?
2. What are the diagnostic strategies used by traditional healers?
3. What are the modalities used by traditional healers in the treatment of various forms of mental illness?
4. What are the methods used by traditional healers' in the treatment of mental illness?
5. What are the prevention methods of mental illness?

Appendix 2: Consent letter

Dear participant

My name is **Nevhudoli Nyadzani Dolphus**, a student at the University of Venda, School of Human and Social Sciences, Department of African Studies. I am conducting a study on the exploration into the use of traditional healing modalities in the provision of mental illness in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province. The study is for academics purpose and all the data that will be collected will be used for the purpose of this study and will not affect you or the relationship with your patients. The interview will last for about 30 minutes.

Please sign the consent form as an indication that you are agreeing to participate in the study.

Signature

Appendix 3

Consent Form

PARTICIPANT

I-----, hereby consent to participate in the research study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study should I want to do so at any time of the study. The conditions of this study have been fully explained to me and I understand the circumstances of my participation.

Signature of the participant: -----Date-----

Witness-----Date-----