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INFORMAL-SECTOR OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS: AN OBSERVATIONAL WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE TRADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

ABSTRACT

Informal traditional medicine markets are trading and processing hubs for a range of plant, animal and mineral materials; however, little is known regarding the occupational risks associated with the processing and handling of these products. The aim of this study was to identify the workplace hazards of the traditional medicine trade. A walk-through observation of the workplace was conducted by two independent observers with formal training in workplace risk evaluation. Ergonomic, physical, chemical, biological and environmental hazards were identified from the handling of plant, animal and/or mineral products. The study gives an insight into a unique and diverse sector.

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