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I: How are you?

R: I am good.

I: As we start, what types of illness do you provide services for in the community?

R: One, for epilepsy I have medicine put in the nose. There is medicine I grind then put in water and dry in the sun and you put one drop.

I: So, the first illness is epilepsy, is there any other you treat or provide services for?

R: The second, if someone is suffering from our women problem--

I: Which women problem?

R: The stomach pain. You can suffer from stomach pain until it prevents you from getting a child.

I: Suffering from stomach pain until it prevents you from getting a child?

R: Yes, or when someone is menstruating--

I: When someone is?

R: When someone is menstruating, there are stomach problems. You can give the person medicine to go warm and drink and it washes the problem.

I: Any other illness you treat?

R: There are many. When someone comes and says "I have met with someone whose husband died and I have been affected, child has diarrhea and has lost weight" --

I: So, someone comes whose husband died, how does the infection come about?

R: Let me say, my husband died, you have come to my place or I have to yours, when I go you won't know what I have done. I will leave the cold there and it will affect the child. The child will be weak, will have diarrhea and will be weak when he stands. There is some medicine to be washed with. If it's a boy they should drink it for 4 days and if it's a girl 3 days.

There is also for the Sexually Transmitted Infections.

I: For the Sexually Transmitted Infections

R: Yes.

I: Any other?

R: Also, someone having rashes on the body, you give them medicine to boil and drink.

A child having measles is given medicine to bath and drink. There is one you can cover them with incense which prevents shock because it shocks the child due to the strain it has on the body causing. So there is one you mix, they go place in the fire and are covered with and the shock ends then you deal with the child with the one for drinking and bathing and the problem ends.

Sometimes someone comes in with stomach typhoid and you give them the medicine, there is amoeba.

There are many.

I: I want to hear those many.

R: Someone comes with his own problem like we had a fight and I have a baby, what do I do; take this medicine, bathe with it, give the baby to drink and carry the baby and the problem is gone. Someone entered the house and did an abortion yet I have a child; take the medicine bath the baby with it and problem is gone.

I: When we began you mentioned epilepsy as one of the illness, do you offer services on epilepsy?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. What do you specifically deal with or treat when you say services about epilepsy?

R: It's the medicine you give and it's to be used as instructed, the condition will start reducing and end.

I: You have its medicine?

R: Yes.

I: Which names are used from the community or area you come from to refer to epilepsy?

There is one we said epilepsy, which other names do people come with when you hear you know they are referring to epilepsy?

R: It's the name someone comes with.

I: The name epilepsy?

R: Yes, or someone tells you my child is falling, he does this way.

I: When you say he does this way--

R: The head is full; you will have to look for a way to help the head.

I: I meant when you say he does this way, someone who is not here and is listening to the recorder will not know what action it is.

R: It is shaking the head.

I: Someone tells you he shakes the head?

R: Yes, he says my child shakes his head.

I: Any other you have heard someone use to refer to epilepsy?

R: When you have such a patient, it's you to come and narrate how the patient is, after the narration then I will tell you I will give you two medicines, I give the one for epilepsy and there is another one and all of them are administered in the nose before looking for one to be drunk. I give the two to be tried first and wait for feedback on how it was or the patient's progress.

I: Okay. If I may ask you, according to your understanding, what do you think is the main cause of epilepsy?

R: We say, if you don't put medicine in a child's nose, you ignore--

I: As?

R: Nowadays, the food we eat has chemicals, illnesses come without knowing the cause. So I will start by asking if they administer nose medicine on a monthly basis and if they say no then I ask why they don't do so because it will hurt the baby.

I: Which is the nose medicine supposed to be administered?

R: It exists.

I: Tell us about it.

R: How will I explain to you yet I don't see its sample.

I: It's a medicine you have?

R: Yes, I have it which I give.

I: The child to be given has epilepsy or doesn't have it yet?

R: Doesn't have it, we are preventing it. And there is medicine for one who has it and there is one for who doesn't have it.

I: You mean not being given the medicine you said--

R: Makes him have the condition or the illness was overturned to him because there are people who overturn the illness to people's children. In that case, you give them the medicine and you advise them to look for a spiritual person.

I: How is it overturned?

R: If I am sick and with what people do, all of sudden I get healed and the illness will—

I: The one who has passed it is the one who has epilepsy?

R: Yes.

I: So, they transmit to someone else?

R: Yes.

I: How does the transmission happen?

R: He can go behind him.

I: What does going behind mean?

R: This mostly happens among Luo and Luhya. My child might be ill and I have tried hospital and herbal interventions but hasn't been successful, for me to push the sickness to someone--

I: You want to push it to someone else?

R: Yes. They look for ways to go to a witch and push the illness to another child. The one for being pushed at cannot be treated and in the end you will bury the child. That's how it is.

I: Any other way, you have mentioned being pushed at, lack of administering nose medicine, is there any other you think causes epilepsy?

R: It's the only one I understand.

I: You haven't met any other you felt can be a cause?

R: It's the only one.

I: Are there different types of epilepsy?

R: There is one when someone falls until they urinate--

I: The first one, someone falls until they urinate?

R: Yes. The one for urinating has clinic medicine someone is supposed to use.

I: The one for falling and urinating has medicine to be used?

R: Yes, which controls it. But the one which starts and you notice the baby has it, you can put it before the illness matures in them.

I: What do you put?

R: You put the medicine in the nose before the illness matures.

I: The medicine you said to have it?

R: Yes.

I: Those are the two different types you are aware of?

R: Yes.

I: Is there any spiritual cause? Because you told us the one of transmission or witchcraft can be of cultural cause, have you heard any spiritual one?

R: No.

I: Haven't heard any?

R: I haven't heard.

I: Tell us about some of the epilepsy cases you have encountered and treated?

R: It's those of a child falling. When they fall you ask the mother to take the medicine and administer it in a child's nose. You leave the child to struggle because the medicine is strong and he will be well when he regains consciousness.

I: When a child falls down?

R: You take the medicine you administer in the nose, leave the child there. Don't move them to the sun, it should be in a cold place for the medicine to work in the head and will wake up after regaining consciousness.

I: And the cases you are aware of where someone came you treated them and how the progress was?

R: There is a woman I treated. I am from talking to her, she took another medicine and went. There is one I also treated, it seems she went upcountry.

I: Does the woman have epilepsy?

R: The child.

I: When did the treatment happen?

R: If it has been in the body for long it ends unless you let it prolong.

I: How was it for the ones you have dealt with, you can talk about the prolonged ones.

R: I have dealt with one if it has prolonged its 6 months, the mother used to come to take medicine. He is so grown up now.

I: How is he?

R: He is well now because I don't see them coming. They succeeded.

I: Any other case? You told me about the woman you were with today.

R: I was with her, she went upcountry. She came today and told me the child is well and she needs medicine to drink.

I: There is another one you mentioned, she went upcountry?

R: She is in the upcountry. Hers was a girl, I feel God blessed the child and she is well.

I: Did you meet with her?

R: No, she called me by phone. They call me 'Ajuoga' when she called me--

I: What do they call you?

R: They call me Ajuoga, she told me she is in the upcountry but God blessed the girl and she is well.

I: What does Ajuoga mean?

R: The work I do.

I: Which work?

R: The one of selling herbs.

I: Ajuoga means someone who sells herbs?

R: Yes.

I: So at least you have been with them and treated them?

R: Yes.

I: How has your experience treating epilepsy been? What do you need to understand, if I came to you with epilepsy case--

R: If you come to me with a case of the illness, I will look for the medicine and give you advice on how to use the medicine. That's it.

I: If I come to you—

R: You tell me, "Ajuoga, my child or I, have a certain problem", I will ask duration of time the problem has existed and you will say it has taken like a month or months. I will give the medicine you administer in the morning when the sun arises around 7 am before it's too sunny also administer in the evening during sun set and administer the following day in the morning then the remaining days after administering for 3 days; morning and evening, keep the remaining medicine, don't administer more than that until next month it's when you administer again and you come for another medicine to be put in the nose to check progress if the illness will give the child peace.

I: Why do you say it should be administered in the morning and evening and for 3 days?

R: It should be that way.

I: It should be that way?

R: Yes, that way, if it surpasses there, it will be an overdose.

I: That's how you recommend?

R: Yes.

I2: You said the second one is put in the nose, where is the other one administered?

R: All are administered in the nose. There is the powder one I grind, you put in the nose when the moon is rising. We as Luo, I am not sure if Luhya do it, we believe for a child's head to

be light, the nose medicine should be put if you don't the child will have mucus all the time and the mucus brings the epilepsy.

I: Does the one being given got the illness? Because you had mentioned there is medicine for one who has it and one who doesn't.

R: Yes.

I: When you say one is given in the morning and evening for 3 days, is it for the one who has or doesn't have the epilepsy?

R: For one who doesn't have, you give in the morning, evening and morning.

I: This is for one without?

R: It's for one without, for one who has it, go and give it at that moment. After you have done that, wait until he falls, you immediately look for the medicine and administer it in nose then leave them there to cough. When they wake up, you look for the other medicine for a person without epilepsy you administer to him.

I: You have mentioned something; you recall a while back I asked about something that causes epilepsy? You have said the child who has no epilepsy, if he is not given the medicine will have mucus which brings epilepsy—

R: The head will be full.

I: You said the head will be full, does it mean if you have mucus—

R: It's not good.

I: Will it cause epilepsy?

R: It can cause because, I don't know how to explain.

I: Do explain how you understand it.

R: To us, a child must be put the medicine in the nose, if he doesn't, you can't even wish to eat close to the child because of the mucus. It reaches a time when a child begins having

epilepsy due to the mucus. It's due to not being given the medicine that causes the child to fall and you are supposed to quickly put the medicine in the nose. It's supposed to be that way.

I: When you say the head becomes heavy, what causes the heaviness?

R: The mucus. When the child sits to play, the child is this way (gestures provided). You notice and look for the medicine to give him and you will have helped the child.

I2: If I understand you well, you mean for you it's a must for the child to be given the medicine whether he has or does not have epilepsy?

R: Yes.

I2: At what age is the medicine administered?

R: It is given at 3 or 4 months, mostly--

I2: When born?

R: Yes, after being born. Some children when born inhale... What is it called? inhale water.

I: Water?

R: Yes, there is some water a child inhales from the mother if there was delay during labor.

I: Water that bursts during birth?

R: Yes. If some children inhale that water, medicine is supposed to be administered immediately to help the child, if you let the child live with it, it will grow in the child. The medicine needs to be administered quickly for the nose to open.

I2: If I got you well, if the medicine is not given the mucus increases and it brings epilepsy?

R: Yes. He must be given.

I: You were about to say it given before the moon--

R: For us we say, right now there is moon?

I2: At day or night?

R: How can we see moonlight? You hear grandmothers at home say the medicine to be given to children in the nose because there is moon.

I: Is that for someone with epilepsy or without?

R: One who doesn't have. We rush to get the medicine, grind it, add water and put it in the sun. By evening we put a little in the nose and they are left.

I: What is the age of such a child?

R: One with 4 years. Let me say it's from the age of 8 months when they begin walking or crawling depending on how light your milk is because my children begin walking at 8 months. At 8 months the medicine is supposed to be put in the nose.

I: What about the one with 4 months you mentioned a while back?

R: The one with 4 months can be given but it should be in a small quantity and blow to ensure it goes in, the strength in the medicine goes to hit the head for --

I: The head to be light. Will you put in for a child without epilepsy?

R: He receives as well. Administering to them early is good than not putting. It's better you start early so when the child grows up won't have problems.

I2: How does the moon, medicine and epilepsy relate? Why should the child be put in the medicine when there is a moon?

R: We put it when there is a moon because we say an illness settles with the moon.

I2: Epilepsy?

R: Yes, and any other illness like the one I said of women, when it attacks you can't walk, can't move with a man and when you sit it's painful as labor.

I2: We are on the point of the moon, medicine and epilepsy.

R: Yes, and it's what I am telling you, it's similar to it. So, when the moon is on, you look for the medicine and put it in the child's nose or the epilepsy of the child goes down with the moon.

I2: Okay, so the moon causes the epilepsy to come down?

R: Yes, it drops with the moon. It's similar to the cold season when we say patients suffer.

I: During cold?

R: Yes, if I have a problem in the body, I am more stuck during the cold season. Asthma people also suffer during the season.

I: So, when the moons lights---

R: It's administered, when it sets it drops with it.

I: For how long have you been treating epilepsy?

R: Which treatment?

I: Working on treatment cases.

R: It depends with how often someone comes. Some take a long time before they come back until you forget the problem.

I: When was the first time you began treatment?

R: Can't recall.

I: It was around? The first case you treated for us to be able to know how long you have been treating epilepsy?

R: Which year is this?

I: It's 2021. You can approximate.

R: If my lastborn is in class 8.

I: How old is he?

R: He was born in 2007 and by the time he was young.

I: When you treated the first epilepsy case?

R: Yes, and now he's in class 8.

I: He's about 14 years old now.

R: Yes. It's been long. I remember the client would also come at night and I would tell her to put the medicine in a valon bottle or put in a tin with hot water for it to evaporate faster and give to the child since there was no sun.

I: So, is it equivalent to the age of your child or how long was it?

R: It's close to 10 years.

I: It's 10 years?

R: Yes, it's 10 years.

I: Okay. Why do you think it's important for people with epilepsy to come and seek treatment from you?

R: Because they are in pain, if someone is in pain, they look for a doctor.

I: Doctors can be many, but why should they come to you?

R: If you are my customer or someone has referred you to me to help with your problem.

I: Why should I come to you?

R: It's either you were referred or while passing by you saw me selling and realized you have a problem in the house and need the things.

I: So, it's either, I was told by someone or I saw you selling while passing by--

R: Yes, you come and inquire and plan on how you will purchase it.

I: Any other reason? This is more of marketing yourself like at a market where you say why your product is better than someone else's and why I should purchase from you?

R: It depends, sometimes it's God's grace that makes a customer to come and they explain their patient issues and we find a solution.

I: So sometimes it's God?

R: Yes. Same to you, did you know you will contact me?

[laughs]

I: Okay. Would you please tell us the specific things/objects that you use to treat epilepsy? You had mentioned one of it, the medicine you put in the nose--

R: Mostly it's the nose medicine, there is no other because it's not drunk unless someone asks you for malaria it's when you mix, one for drinking and one for applying in the nose.

I: What things do you use specifically for epilepsy?

R: Only it.

I: There is nothing else you have used when people come for treatment?

R: Yes, every sickness has its Panadol, I deal with the nose one only. There is no other place it can be put.

I: How does the nose one look like?

R: I am planning to look for the mouth one that is drunk.

I: It is for--

R: It's for epilepsy.

I: You want to look for the one to be drunk?

R: Yes.

I: How does the nose one look like?

R: For the nose, I have green and brown.

I: Green and brown, you said the other one is drunk so it's in liquid form, what about the nose one?

R: Yes, the other is liquid but the nose one is in powder form because it is grinded.

I: How do you prepare it when you say it is grinded?

R: When I dry it, I --

I: Where do you get it from?

R: From upcountry.

I: You prune and come with it

R: I get others from around here, Kamiti, Kiganjo because I am aware of the herbs.

I: What happens after pruning them?

R: I select and group the herbs differently depending on the sickness it treats. I then dry for the epilepsy and nose, I sit down and grind with a stone until it's in powder form, I then sieve for it to be soft.

I: What do you use for sieving?

R: A sieve.

I: Then you start---

R: It's when I start using it.

I: How does it become brown and the other color?

R: The green one its leaves is green and the brown, its roots are brown.

I: There are the leaves and roots?

R: Yes.

I: And you grind both?

R: Yes, I grind both.

I: What is the difference between the two medicines?

R: It is its use.

I: We need to know.

R: The green one is for the nose and the brown one is for epilepsy.

I: Where do you put the brown one?

R: Every medicine has its own bottle. If a client comes and is in need of the epilepsy medicine, I get the medicine from its bottle and I give it.

I: You have said the brown one from the roots is for epilepsy?

R: Yes.

I: Is it put in the nose as well?

R: Yes, it's also put in the nose.

I: Is there an instance where you give the two medicines to one person at ago?

R: Yes.

I: When does it happen?

R: If the illness has really prolonged, I will give the brown one and instruct him on use, and when finished he can start using the green one.

I: What is the green one for?

R: It is for the nose.

I: What does it treat? You said the brown one treats epilepsy.

R: It's only for putting in the nose.

I: To remove whatever, you said—

R: Yes, to remove cold or mucus when it's too much.

I: When it's full?

R: Yes, the green one is not as strong as the brown one. There is an age you cannot give the brown one.

I: What age?

R: A child aged 3,5 or 6 months. The green one is better for them because the brown is strong.

I: So, the brown is concentrated or strong so it can't be given to the child?

R: Yes, it cannot. Parents fear its adverse effects on the baby.

I: You said you give the brown to children with epilepsy, how long should that child come for the medicine?

R: It should be used for 2 months while tracking progress on how long it's taken for the epilepsy to end. They can use for the 2 months and you are told the child got well, so you give the green one to be used every month to see how the child opens.

I: How many times in a month?

R: Thrice a month, in the morning, evening and morning and the cycle goes on.

I: How is the brown one used within the 2 months?

R: It's kept until the child falls, that's when you give the medicine and leave the child to relax.

I: You have talked about a child, to what age is the brown medicine recommended?

R: To adults too.

I: So, adults use it as well?

R: Yes, also ages 10, 9. It depends because the illness is not so common. You won't sell every day or for a full day to people with the problem. They come once in a while.

You can sell in January and it will take so long before you get someone else with such a problem. It's not like the other illnesses or problems because it's only a few people who have the condition.

I: On that point of few people, how would you describe the demand for your services to treat epilepsy in this community?

You mentioned a village in your community where you practice the treatment, how can you explain the demand for epilepsy services?

R: They only come once in a while; I haven't had any other in the last 3 months.

I: So, it is once in a while?

R: Yes.

I: Why do you think the demand is the way it is?

R: Because it's not a common illness. Not many people know about the nose medicine.

I: Is the issue the illness not being common or people not being aware of the medicine?

R: It's not common because you can raise a child without using the medicine. The most common illness that people come more often for is stomach pain, tongue or mixing medicines that are not for epilepsy. With such, I can sell Monday to Monday.

I: Any other reason apart from the one you said of it not being common or people not knowing the medicine--

R: They are not aware.

I: Could there be another reason why most people do not come for the medicine?

R: Not many people have it.

I: You feel it's because not many people have it as well?

R: Yes. In your family, you can be born and grow up unaware of such a problem. It happens.

I: Yes.

R: It is how it is.

I2: To follow up, you said epilepsy is not common compared to the others? Can you compare either in a week, day or month of how many epilepsy cases you receive compared to other problems?

R: I cannot compare in a day or month. I can go up to a year without receiving such a case.

I2: Epilepsy case?

R: Yes, very few. I go up to a year.

I2: A year can go by without an epilepsy case?

R: Yes, it's through God's luck for a patient to come by. You get a parent whose child has issues of falling and after explaining the patient's struggle, you give medicine accordingly. For such a patient, it will take long before they come to give a report on the progress of the medicine.

I: When was the last time you handled an epilepsy case?

R: The last time was in the month of September.

I2: For the whole year?

R: Yes, only in September. When I was called by phone, I took the medicine.

I2: But people in the community do know you treat epilepsy? It's not that they ignore coming?

R: Those who know I treat do come.

I2: Apart from September this year, you haven't treated any other epilepsy case?

R: Only one.

I: Those you have treated before don't come back for medicine?

R: After being healed they go. The other lady used to come often because her child case had worsened. I advised her to look for me when the child falls to take the medicine, warm and put it in the child's nose even when it's cold.

I: Okay. Do you think people appreciate your services? Like what you do—

R: Yes.

I: Tell us how you knew it.

R: They know; people call me to go to them.

I: There are those who call you,

R: I get called and they tell me they were given my number by someone else—

I: Referrals.

R: Yes, I give them directions on how to get to me from their various residences using a motorbike or a vehicle. That's how I deal with them.

I: Any other way they appreciate your services?

R: It's the phone one.

I2: How far do they come from, as per the ones you have said you give directions to?

R: They come from Majengo, Githurai, Mwiki and there is one I went to his place at South B. Others call me to hospitals. I go carrying it.

I: What do they do?

R: I take medicine to hospitals such as hospital I and G.

I2: Is the patient hospitalized?

R: The patient is hospitalized and even has a baby. The medicine is for the baby.

I2: Does the baby take the medicine while in the hospital?

R: Yes, I go at lunch time, I enter and give instructions on the use of the medicine. The doctors know the medicines but they don't believe in them so I hide it.

I2: You hide it to give to them?

R: Yes. After giving it and they get some recovery they ask to be discharged.

I: Tell us about how you know when there has been some improvement or healing in an epilepsy patient after they have been treated by you? You mentioned a while back about some who don't come back after they are healed; how do you know they are healed?

R: Phones were expensive those times so it was a challenge to afford to purchase--

I: What?

R: A phone.

So, it would take them long before meeting again, but they would then tell you the thing they took was successful--

I: The thing we are talking about is epilepsy?

R: Yes, and the child got well. At times they sent someone or come to take on behalf of someone because once you find help at a place you can't forget, or can you?

I: No. What do you mean when you say it was successful?

R: It means he got healed and he is well.

I: So sometimes they take long--

R: Yes, you wonder where the customer went to.

I: What do you do? Do you look for them?

R: I don't look for them, they come on their own someday.

I: So, they disappear then later--

R: You don't see them and wonder about their whereabouts. The one who came today, whom I attended to before coming here, told me she had been upcountry for construction purposes and she is well.

I: What type of illness was the customer of today seeking service for?

R: She used to take epilepsy medicine before but today she came for the washing one.

I: How is the progress after the--

R: It went well, she had taken the epilepsy medicine for her child, I think the child was a boy.

I: How is the child progressing?

R: She said the child is well.

I2: When you take the medicine to hospitalized patients in the hospitals you mentioned, are the patients suffering from epilepsy?

R: No, it's the other sicknesses.

I: How do you know when you are unable to treat the epilepsy illness?

R: The patient will come to give feedback.

I: So, he informs you?

R: Yes, he must come to notify me of the patient's progress. If he doesn't inform me there is no way I will know. Then you can give him advice because some illnesses are unable to be treated with the medicine given.

I: Have you ever faced such a case and what advice did you give?

R: I haven't.

I: Okay. When you say other advice, what can it be?

R: You tell them to take the patient to hospital if the medicine did not work.

I: So, if the medicine didn't work you would suggest hospital treatment?

R: Yes.

I: What happens when someone with epilepsy dies? Are there different rituals? What happens to his spirit?

R: If someone had the illness and was neglected is similar to having stomach pain and the more you are unattended the more you suffer.

I: So, when such an epileptic person dies due to epilepsy--

R: He will be dead because the illness will have affected him for long and destroyed his blood.

I: Are there any cultural rituals done on him after his death?

R: There are no rituals for such. The only rituals are for a man, woman or child done during death.

I: Is the ritual due to epilepsy?

R: No, epilepsy kills. Sometimes when treatment doesn't work, you might give up and leave it up to God. For epilepsy, people fall on the stove or in fire if left alone cooking and get burnt or fall in water and get hurt on the body and these bring about death.

I: So, when they die there is no ritual done?

R: No. I don't see any ritual.

I: Okay. We have reached the end of our conversation. I will let my colleague get some clarifications if there is a point, she did not get it clearly.

My colleague has no questions for you.

Do you wish to ask us any question as we end the conversation?

[Laughs]

R: What can I ask?

I: Anything to add on.

R: We will meet again. I am heading to Chama—

I2: Do you have anything to add on concerning your work as a herbalist on treating epilepsy?

I: I wish to know more; I want to go upcountry and learn more.

I2: Who will you learn more from in upcountry?

R: There are people.

I: Which people?

R: You get taught on this; you don't do it on your own.

I: Who teaches you?

R: When there, you can meet an old woman who does similar work and you can ask them what illness a certain herb treats because we might be having different knowledge on what the same herb treats.

I: How many times do you go to learn?

R: The last time I was there, I had taken my child to school. When I go again, I will get other herbs because some can only be gotten from there.

I: For epilepsy?

R: There are those I get from upcountry for epilepsy. If the ones from upcountry get exhausted, I can prune from around here because I am familiar with them. So, it's good having more knowledge to be able to support other people.

I2: So, knowing more is knowing a variety of herbs?

R: Yes. One herb can treat more than one illness.

I: Thank you for your time and keep up the good work.

[End of audio]

