

<b>NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER</b>
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>EPINA PROJECT</b>
<b>CONTACT TYPE</b>	<b>IDI Traditional Healer</b>
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<b>DURATION</b>	<b>26 minutes 26 seconds</b>

**I: This is an IDI with a traditional healer at Viwandani field office, Lungalunga square. Welcome. We are going to talk about epilepsy, what services do you as a traditional healer offer to people?**

R: When someone is brought to me I will give them three types of trees I do not know them in Swahili.

**I: What do the three trees treat?**

R: Epilepsy. Epileptic persons might be missing water in their body, or there is a blood vessel that is not passing blood the way it's supposed to. You make the medicine and boil for them, they go drink two times a day. This medicine helps to unclog the blocked blood vessels in their body.

**I: Do you treat other diseases apart from epilepsy or is there any other way you help people?**

R: Yes, I also remove objects in the body using my mouth.

**I: Which other things do you treat?**

R: That's all.

**I: What terms do the Viwandani community use to refer to epilepsy?**

R: We refer to epilepsy as Kisaara in Kamba and Kifafa in Swahili. That's the one when someone comes I will boil those three trees and give them also if it is to unclog a blood vessel in their body, and the rest is on me.

**I: Okay. We want to hear the way you are saying such as blood--**

R: Epilepsy also comes about when a small child falls down and injures their spine or falls with their head and gets injured somewhere. As they grow up the blood vessel will not expand, it gets clogged. That's what I know.

**I: Thank you. You have said that clogging of blood vessels may cause epilepsy?**

R: Yes, clogging of a blood vessel in their body hence the blood circulates slowly, that causes epilepsy and also inadequate water in the body. That's why an epileptic person takes a lot of water, 2 to 3 jugs when they regain consciousness.

**I: Thank you, is there any other factor that causes epilepsy?**

R: Dangerous falling. A child may fall from a very high height for example from a tree and hit their head on rocks in the process and the mother did not know that the child was injured.

**I: Okay. Does the term Kisaara have a different meaning?**

R: It means falling down and hurling hands in the air, losing consciousness then they awaken. There is a dangerous one where someone falls and even bite their tongue.

**I: Those are the types of epilepsy you are familiar with?**

R: Yes, those are the ones I know.

**I: Are there any other types of epilepsy?**

R: No, I do not know any other type of epilepsy.

**I: You have said there are different types of epilepsy, are they caused by a specific factor?**

R: Like I earlier said; they may be caused by inadequate water in the body or blockage of a blood vessel. Also, high fever may also be a factor and they must sweat.

**I: Can epilepsy be caused by spiritual factors?**

R: No.

It is a disease just like any other, injuries are mostly what causes epilepsy.

**I: Thank you. You have mentioned that you help people treat epilepsy, give an example of the patients you have treated.**

R: That is why I said there are some herbs you get from upcountry, you remove the skin, they are three types of trees. Then you boil and give them to take twice a day.

**I: Have you treated many people with epilepsy?**

R: No.

**I: How many have you treated?**

R: Two.

**I: Did all the two get cured? How are they?**

R: I know one got cured and went to the upcountry.

**I: Okay. Are you familiar with the cases you treated and never got cured?**

R: I can't know; others you don't meet again after treatment since they can be brought to you here in Nairobi yet they come from the upcountry.

**I: Where mostly do those you treat come from?**

R: The two I treated, one was from the village Ukambani and the other came from here in Nairobi.

**I: Okay. Thank you. What is your experience treating people with epilepsy?**

R: It is a dry period; I don't get a lot of people to treat nowadays.

**I: Can you say you have experience in treating people with epilepsy?**

R: I told you I have treated two people. You know people don't get sick from one disease. Do not be like a Maasai who whichever disease you say you have they give you the same medication [laughs].

**I: What other disease do you treat?**

I treat any other brought to me like when someone has been brought with objects in the body. Let's say they have been seen inside the stomach, legs or different parts of the body. I always remove them.

**I: Do you refer epileptic people to yourself for treatment?**

R: No, I can't call them. They come at their own free will, you can't advertise your hospital for people to come. People go where they want.

**I: What is the importance of using a traditional healer to treat epilepsy?**

R: I have knowledge on how to use the tree barks to make medicines that treat epilepsy. They are not here in Nairobi, you have to go to the upcountry to get and mix them.

**I: Do you think that those who go to hospitals get the right treatment?**

R: Yes. They may get cured of the drugs administered.

**I: What about those with epilepsy?**

R: For epilepsy you treat using traditional medicine. You know it depends on your clan or how you got injured as I had told you before.

**I: Is epilepsy curable?**

R: Yes, genetic inheritance may lead to epilepsy.

**I: Is the treatment the same for; an epileptic person from genetic inheritance and those from other factors?**

R: Yes, the treatments are different. Those falling down go for a scan to determine the main cause.

**I: What about that one for inheritance?**

R: While in genetic inheritance, we just treat using the traditional medication.

**I: How is traditional healing done?**

R: The person will get someone to get them the trees and then they will be given to them. You can go somewhere where more than one person is falling, then that one is genetic.

**I: Can you name the three trees used?**

R: The trees used to treat epilepsy are known as; *Mukeneea, Musemei and Chuuku*.

**I: Those are the trees you---**

R: I don't know how they are called in Kiswahili. I am speaking in Kamba.

**I: It's okay, even those you don't know in Swahili you can say them in Kamba. How many times do people in Viwandani come to see you in a day?**

R: It's rare, you can stay for so many days without seeing anyone. I have only treated one person this year who needed objects removed from the body.

**I: So there are not many people?**

R: Yes, there are not many.

**I: Why do you think that the flow of people is so minimal?**

R: I don't know, maybe it could be due to low income.

**I: How much do you charge for your services to treat epilepsy?**

R: We come to an agreement on how much to pay during the encounter.

**I: Are people happy with the services you render?**

R: Yes, they are satisfied.

**I: How do you tell that they were satisfied?**

R: I receive post visits from those that had accompanied them, these people confirm that the patient is doing okay.

**I: Thank you. How do you tell there are changes when you treat a person, like in the case of the one person you treated?**

R: For the one that I treated which was a long time ago. You know this disease is not common like the flu. The mother came back and said that the child was doing fine.

**I: What differences do you observe in the person?**

R: Depending on what you will see.

**I: What things show that person is getting well? In case of a flu someone will be coughing but if they get well the coughing stops.**

R: When a person starts getting well. If they were falling down, this decreases. If a person was falling 2,3 times, it reduces to one. As the person continues taking the medicine, the issue may even totally disappear. Why was I told other people would come? Where are they?

**I: Others?**

R: Who are to be asked questions like these...

**I: The doctors?**

R: Yes I was told that by that lady.

**I: They will come later. We are calling them one by one.**

**Have you ever gotten a case that you couldn't treat?**

R: No, when I am unable to treat a disease, I just tell the person I can't do it. It's not good to love money and take someone's money and yet you can't treat that disease and they are not going to get better.

**I: How do you tell a case you can't handle?**

R: Just by observing, I deal with cases I'm familiar with. There are some I can't treat, when a person gets very sick, they are sent to those big hospitals.

**I: What factors show that the illness can't be handled by a traditional healer?**

R: Maybe when a person goes to a hospital and the medication administered is not helping and they go get traditional medicine. Can these questions cause me any problems?

**I: No they won't. That's why I explained to you that when we are doing this research there is nowhere we will say someone told us this. It's just like during election time; they use the statistics to communicate the findings. Don't be afraid that someone will tell you that you told or taught them about the treatment.**

R: There was a time we were called at Cana, they draw out blood and do all the tests. I went with a certain woman. I didn't see any problem.

**I: Don't be afraid. It's a project that wants to explore more about epilepsy and how you treat it because you are a herbalist in Viwandani and you have the experience which is important. That's why we called you here we talk, where there are no people and a place where you can feel comfortable to give us information. isn't it?**

R: Yes, it is.

**I: Do not be afraid of anything. What happens to the body of a person who died from epilepsy? any rituals?**

R: They just die.

**I: There are no certain rules or rituals that are to be followed when they have epilepsy?**

R: No.

**I: A person has a body and spirit. Is there something that happens to someone's spirit when they die from epilepsy?**

R: No, that one I do not know.

**I: I don't know if my colleague has something to add.**

**I2: Please tell us more if it is important for someone with epilepsy to come to seek services from you?**

R: How important?

**I2: If it's important, instead of going to the hospital. Is it important for them to come look for herbal medicine like the ones you told us earlier, Mukenea, Musemei and Chuuku?**

R: Someone might have been treated in the hospital and did not get cured and therefore they might want to try the traditional herbs.

**I2: So it's someone who decides where they want to get treatment?**

R: Yes.

**I2: There is none that is better than the other?**

R: No, none is better than the other, because some might get sick and choose just to go to hospital and not to a traditional healer.

**I: You said that recently people do not come for treatment, how was it before and are there any changes?**

R: That is how it has been because others are in the upcountry, and I left to come here. So they go to other hospitals.

**I: Have people stopped going to traditional healers, or do they see going to traditional healers is better than going to hospitals?**

R: Some go to traditional healers and others to hospitals. If you have a person and you don't know where to take them, you must take them to the hospital.

**I: Does epilepsy have an aspect of someone's spirit or is it just the body?**

R: It is just the head that brings this and due to having a lot of thoughts. That is why you see some women who stand a lot falling down.

**I: So they fall down because of thinking a lot?**

R: It's because they are tired, their minds also get tired. [Laughs]

**I: Is there something that can be done to help them rest the minds?**

R: You should take them to a place that is cold and give them some air.

**I: Now that you have said that they fall down due to a lot of thoughts, can it happen to other people or just the one living with epilepsy?**

R: No, anyone can fall, even myself. I might stand for a long time, then my back and mind gets tired and I feel dizzy. You know you are young; you don't know if people get tired [Laughs].

**I: I am still young...**

R: Yes, you can stand for many hours.

**I: How do you differentiate those who fall due to epilepsy and those who fall due to thoughts?**

R: It will be easy to know; because you can tell that someone is tired but an epileptic person will fall all the time even when seated.

**I: Let's say I meet with someone who has fallen that I don't know, what indicators will I look at?**

R: The people who you can differentiate are those that you know like a family member but if you met them on the road you will not be able to tell since you do not know their conditions.

**I2: Please explain to us, you told us most of the time you were in the upcountry treating people before you came to Nairobi, the time you were in the upcountry did your services have more demand?**

R: No it was not high.

**I2: You were not treating many people?**

R: I said it is just two people and one recently went to upcountry and I hear that they are doing well.

**I: We have come to the end of our conversation. Do you have something to add?**

R: No, I do not have anything to add.

**I: Okay thank you.**

[End of audio]