

Abstract

A survey was conducted to ascertain the clay applications and its health effects on humans among the rural communities. Household survey, focus group discussion and direct observation were employed. A structured questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.82 was used to collect data. Majority of respondents were male (51.2%) aged 21 to 40 years, had primary education (32.2 %), monthly income below Ksh.5,000 (69.0 %) mainly from farming (47.1 %) and brickmaking (31.6 %); and less than 10 years (38.5 %) in clay production. Traditional applications of clay were pottery (81.0 %), brick making (55.7 %), cooking jikos (94.9 %) and plastering walls / floors (70.1 %). Food cooked from clay pots was perceived to taste different from those prepared using conventional utensils (91.3%). Most respondents (79.8%) ascertained that, they experienced skin irritation during clay production processes. The study findings give an insight of existing traditional clay applications. Furthermore it forms the basis on which the probable clay minerals in the study area can be explored for modern applications.