

MEDICINAL PLANTS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in eastern and western zone of Haryana state. Three districts from each zone and two blocks from each district were selected randomly. A total sample of 600 rural women was drawn from twelve villages, one village from each block. Majority of the users used ginger for infectious diseases in both lower and upper middle age group while onion was used by majority of users in upper middle age group for infectious diseases. Most of users in upper middle age group used *Tulsi* and Turmeric for infectious diseases. The rhizomes of ginger in form of juice was taken for cold by majority of users. Most of users used tulsi leaves and bulb of onion in form of juice for cold and ear infection in both lower and upper middle age group.

INTRODUCTION

India is a rich country in terms of its resource base. The size, location and physical condition of the country has made it rich in terms of both biological and geological resources. Their use in different spheres to improve the quality of life is evident in our day today living.

Our country is recognized as a treasure house of indigenous knowledge. This vast bank of indigenous knowledge has been transmitted through oral communication among the masses and has passed from generation to generation.

Plants have been used by man since pre-historic days for relieving sufferings and curing illness. Primitive people when injured in battle or had a fall or cut, instinctively resorted to materials available at hand for stopping the flow of blood or relieving of pain and by trial they learned that certain plants were useful for the purpose.

The knowledge about the use of medicinal plants has accrued through centuries and such plants are still valued today although synthetics antibiotics, etc., have come into more prominence in modern medicine. It is, however, a fact that these synthetics and antibiotics although they often show miraculous instantaneous results, prove harmful in the long run and that is why many synthetics and antibiotics have now gone out of use or have been

specified to be prescribed strictly under medical supervision. In case of most medicinal plants, however, no such cumulative derogatory effect has been recorded and that is why many of the so-called grandmother medicines obtained from plants still maintain their reputation even today. Rural people's knowledge is often superior to that of outsiders. Rural people's knowledge and scientific knowledge are complementary in their strength and weaknesses.

Keeping in view all the concepts discussed by the various researchers, it might be said that the local people specially the rural women with their own experiences and experimentation to meet their needs generate traditional health practices or indigenous health practices. It is used by local people in their daily lives. The knowledge and usage of this knowledge has diluted with the passage of time although these are as important and effective today as they were thousand of years ago. The present study was conducted with the objective to study the medicinal plants for infectious diseases.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in eastern and western zone of Haryana State. Three districts from each zone i.e. Sonapat, Panipat and Karnal districts from eastern zone and Hisar, Bhiwani and Rohtak districts from western zone were selected

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randomly. Two blocks from each district and one village from each block were selected at randomly. Fifty rural women 25 in lower middle age group and 25 in upper middle age group from each village were taken, thus a total of six hundred rural women were included in the study sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Use of medicinal plant for infectious diseases:

It is evident from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (92.0%) used ginger for cold followed by 41 percent of respondents using *tulsi* by lower middle age group women. In upper middle age group most of the respondents (93.3%) used ginger for cold followed by 43.7 per cent using *tulsi* and 18.6 per cent using safeda for cold. About 40 per cent respondents in upper middle age group and 11.3 per cent in lower middle age group were using turmeric for the treatment of cold.

The data further reveal that only 0.7 per cent respondents used anola for cough by lower middle age group. While 11.3 per cent respondents of upper middle age group were found to use *kikar* for cough followed by the use of amla by very few respondents (4.3%).

None of the respondents in lower middle age group was using medicinal plants for tonsillitis, however, very few respondents in upper middle age group were found to use *kikar* for tonsillitis followed by use of haldi and lahsun.

For ear infection very few respondents in upper middle age group used aloe vera while majority in both the age groups were using onion for the treatment of ear infection.

Thus, it may be inferred that ginger and *tulsi* were used by most the respondents in curing cold in both the age groups. However, the use of *safeda* for cold, *kikar* for cough was more in case of upper middle age group. Very few respondents in upper middle age group used aonla, tumeric and *kikar* for the treatment of cough and tonsillitis.

The findings are in line with Sidhu (2009) was reported that Ginger, Garlic, Black pepper and onion medicinal plants were commonly used for cold, cough, tonsillitis, nose infection, nose bleeding and ear infections.

Table 1. Use of medicinal plants for infectious diseases by respondents.

| Infectious Diseases | Medicinal Plants | Lower middle age f (n=300) | Upper middle age f (n=300) |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cold | Tulsi | 123 (41.0) | 131 (43.7) |
| | Ginger | 276 (92.0) | 280 (93.3) |
| | Safeda | 0 (0.0) | 56 (18.6) |
| | Turmeric | 34 (11.3) | 12 (4.0) |
| Cough | Babul | 0 (0.0) | 34 (11.3) |
| | Amla | 2 (0.7) | 13 (4.3) |
| | Turmeric | 53 (17.7) | 138 (46.0) |
| Tonsillitis | Babul | 0 (0.0) | 21 (7.0) |
| | Garlic | 0 (0.0) | 3 (1.0) |
| | Rai | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) |
| | Turmeric | 0 (0.0) | 12 (4.0) |
| Ear Infection | Aloe Vera | 0 (0.0) | 13 (4.3) |
| | Onion | 123 (41.0) | 204 (68.0) |

* Multiple responses, Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

2. Part of medicinal plant and form of medicine used in infectious diseases

Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents (96.7%) in lower middle age group used juice made up from rhizome of ginger mixed with honey for cold followed by 41 per cent respondents using juice made up of grinded leaves of *tulsi*. Only 16 per cent respondents were using leaves of safeda for cold. While in upper middle age group, majority of the respondents (98.3%) used juice of rhizomes of ginger followed by *tulsi* leaves (43.7%) and leaves of safeda (30.6%) for cold. Only two per cent of respondents in upper middle age group used fruit of safeda for cold. Forty per cent respondents in upper middle age group and only 11.3 per cent in lower middle age group used haldi powder one tea spoon, mixed with one glass of hot milk for the treatment of cold. Very few respondents in upper middle age group (11.3%) used the bark of *kikar* after boiling in water for the treatment of cough. Powder of roots of turmeric and fruit of anola and juice of garlic mixed with honey was used by 7 per cent and 1 per cent of the respondents for the treatment of tonsillitis.

The table further shows that very few respondents in upper middle age group were found to put drops of juice of Aloe Vera leaves in the ear. Majority of the respondents in both the age groups

were using drops of juice of onion in case of ear infection. Thus, most of the respondents used liquid form of leaves of tulsi while nearly all the respondents used rhizomes of ginger for cold.

Table 2. Part of medicinal plant and form of medicine used for infectious disease

| Infectious Diseases | Plant used | Part used | Form of medicine | Lower middle age f (n=300) | Upper middle age f (n=300) |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cold | Tulsi | Leaves | Juice | 123 (41.0) | 131 (43.8) |
| | Ginger | Rhizomes | Juice | 290 (96.7) | 295 (98.3) |
| | Safeda | Leaves | Liquid | 48 (16.0) | 92 (30.6) |
| | | Fruit | Liquid | 0 (0.0) | 7 (2.3) |
| Cough | Turmeric | Root | Powder | 34 (11.3) | 121 (40.0) |
| | Kikar | Bark | Liquid | 0 (0.0) | 34 (11.3) |
| | Anola | Dry Fruit | Powder | 2 (0.7) | 13 (4.3) |
| | Turmeric | Root | Powder | 53 (17.7) | 138 (46.0) |
| Tonsillitis | Kikar | Bark | Paste | 0 (0.0) | 21 (7.0) |
| | Garlic | Clove | Juice | 0 (0.0) | 3 (1.0) |
| | Turmeric | Root | Powder | 0 (0.0) | 121 (40.0) |
| Ear Infection | Onion | Bulb | Juice | 123 (41.0) | 204 (68.0) |
| | Aloe Vera | Leaves | Juice | 0 (0.0) | 13 (4.3) |

* Multiple responses, Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

CONCLUSION

Majority of respondents used ginger for cold and nearly half of the respondents use *tulsi* for cold in both the age group. While in upper middle age group 40 percent of respondents were also using turmeric for the treatment of cold. However, the use of *safeda* for cold, *kikar* for cough was more in case of upper middle age group. Very few respondents in upper middle age group used anola, tumeric and *kikar* for the treatment of cough and tonsillitis.

Majority of respondents in both the age group were using drops of juice of onion in case of ear infection. Most of respondents used liquid form of leaves of *tulsi* while nearly all the respondents used rhizomes of ginger for cold.

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