

УДК 332.1; 633.8

Traditional medicine in Cameroon

Ngalle, T.E.¹, Darashkevich, I.N.¹, Lapata, A.S.¹Grodno State Agrarian University, Republic of Belarus¹

The article points out the specific features and traditional approaches in the treatment of diseases with medicinal plants in Cameroon. It is indicated that the use of medicinal plants is based primarily on traditions and low income of a significant part of the population.

Keywords: medicinal plants, traditional medicine, economics of herbal market.

Introduction. It is well known that the population of many countries traditionally uses medicinal plants as agents for the prevention and treatment of diseases. Despite the rapid development of scientific and technological progress in the field of modern medicine and pharmaceutical production, the use of medicinal herbs as medicinal preparations stays on a stable level, and sometimes even tends to some growth.

A lot of plants have been used medicinally throughout history. Each nation has its own traditions, rules and specific behavior of it using. For example, Chinese herbalism is the most dominant of the ancient herbal medicine. Modern Western herbalism focused on effects of herbs on individual body system rather than taking a holistic approach [12]. Today there are lots of factors which influence the development of medicinal plant use across the World. Usually it is obvious that in low- and middle-income economies main reasons are traditions among population and slow development of pharmaceutical industry.

Main part. In Relation to Western nations, Cameroon healthcare is very much lacking. The condition of medical help is even worst in the rural parts, villages and regions of the country with low distribution of hospitals. In-fact most villages depend exclusively on original traditional medicines and self-treatment for their healthcare. This method of treatment can be very effective, if properly administered. In-fact most pharmaceutical use great amount of plants in their research and development efforts for new treatment possibilities. In Western countries (especially in USA) foraging of medicinal plants by the rural population for their own consumption is not wide spread. There, going to the countryside to collect useful plants is perceived as a part of ecological and ethnographic events, when a special instructor teaches groups of those who wish to collect and use plants.

Traditional medicine is fundamentally based on the belief that herbs can cure lots of diseases afflicting humans. Most popular advantages of traditional medicine among people are: Low cost (5-20\$); Not known side effects; Readily available to all, regardless of status in society. Nevertheless, the lack of regulation on the practice of traditional doctors puts the most disadvantages people in the Cameroonian society at risk, which runs from no follow-up, record-keeping or accountability of any kind on the practice.

Due to Cameroon's rich biodiversity, Cameroon has proven to be a heaven for traditional medicine from all over African and for modern pharmaceutical drug research efforts. It is safe to say that the greater value of herbs is shown for the treatment diseases of the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, kidneys and genitourinary system, cardiovascular disease. For example, *Diospyros sanza-minika* (for treatment of Epilepsy, paralysis, pains) [10]; *Garcinia polyantha Oliv* (for treatment of wounds); *Morus mesozygia* (Arthritis, rheumatism, malnutrition, debility, pain-killers, stomach disorders, infections, gastroenteritis, peptic ulcer, infectious diseases) [8]; *Piper umbellatum* (Poisoning, pitting edema, fetal malpresentation, filariasis, rheumatism, hemorrhoids) [9]; *Dorstenia mannii* (Rheumatism, stomach disorders),

Thomandersia hensii (Malaria, diarrhea, colitis, furuncles, abscesses, syphilis, ulcers, urogenital) [1]. Cameroon Korup national park has the largest tree species of any rainforest in the world. It is of interest to United States National Cancer Institute for the plant *Ancistrocladus korupensis* for its fight against AIDS [2], *Moringa oleifera* (asthma, diabetes, obesity, symptoms of menopause) [7] and a lot of other.

Cameroon has about 8,620 plant species and several animal groups [3], encountered in both protected (about 8%), and unprotected areas. About 155 plant species are classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) as threatened species. This Protected zone; include both land (3,741 ha) and marine areas (389 ha). Traditional healing plays an integral role in black African culture as it provides primary health care needs for a large majority (about 80%) of the population [11]. In Cameroon, there is a rich tradition in the use of herbal medicine for the treatment of several ailments and most of these herbs are grown by personal individuals for home consumption and sometimes collected in the forest from the barks, roots, and leaves of trees. Individuals with more knowledge of traditional medicine (specialist) such as diviners, midwives, and herbalists pick up these herbs for commercial purposes. Sales of traditional medicines as over the counter drugs has recently gained ground not only in the Cameroonian markets but also in traditional-medical pharmacies and as mobile business in Express Bus Services during inter-regional bus journeys. Notwithstanding, information on the population's attachment to traditional medicines despite the advent of modern medicines is still inadequate [4]. Sixty-eight percent of the documented plants are used to treat more than twenty important diseases. They are used as decoction, infusion, maceration, powder, powder mixtures, plaster, calcinations, and squeeze in water, boiling, cooking with young cock or sheep meat or groundnut paste, direct eating, juice, fumigation, and sitz bath [5]. The most recurrent diseases or disorders treated are typhoid, male sexual disorders, malaria, gonorrhea, gastritis, rheumatism, fever, dysentery, diarrhea, dermatitis, boils, cough, wounds, syphilis, sterility, sexually transmitted diseases, ovarian cysts, and amoebiasis, with more than two hundred plants being used to cure these diseases or disorders [6].

Conclusions. Thus, the use of medicinal plants in Cameroon is a traditional phenomenon. It draws on both economic factors associated with low income and generations of experience in treating disease. Due to its great biodiversity, medicinal plants of Cameroon can be a good source for increasing the income of rural residents and finding new elements for synthesized drugs.

References

1. Boyom, F.F., Kemgne, E.M., Tepongning, R., Nguouana, V., Mbacham, W.F., Tsamo, E., Zollo, P.H., Gut, J., Rosenthal, P.J. Antiplasmodial activity of extracts from seven medicinal plants used in malaria treatment in Cameroon, 2009. - P. 123.
2. Cameroon Healthcare. Retrieved from cameroon today [Electronic resource]. - 07.09.2020. - Mode of access: <https://www.cameroon-today.com/cameroon-healthcare.html>.
3. EarthTrends. Retrieved from Biodiversity and Protected Areas-Cameroon [Electronic resource]. - 07.09.2020. - Mode of access: http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profile.
4. Interest and perceptions on traditional medicines in Cameroon. Retrieved from research gate [Electronic resource]. - 14.07.2020. - Mode of access: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319312281_Interest_and_perceptions_on_traditional_medicines_in_Cameroon.
5. Jiofack, T., Fokunang, C., Guedje N., Kemeuze, V., Fongzossie, E., Nkongmeneck, B.A., Mapongmetsem, P.M., Tsabang, N. Ethnobotanical uses of medicinal plants of two

ethnoecological region of cameroon/ International Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences, 2010. - P. 60-79.

6. Kuete, V., & Efferth, T. Cameroon medicinal plant. Retrieved from phamacology and derived natural product.frontiers in phamacology [Electronic resource]. - 10.07.2020. - Mode of access: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar>.

7. Moringa. Retrieved from WebMD [Electronic resource]. - 13.07.2020. - Mode of access: <https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-1242/moringa>.

8. Noumi, E., Dibakto, T.W. Medicinal plants used for peptic ulcer in the Bangangté region, western Cameroon/ Fitoterapia, 2002. - P. 71.

9. Tabopda T.K., Ngoupayo J., Liu J., Mitaine-Offer A.C., Tanoli S.A., Khan S.N., Ali M. S., Ngadjui B.T., Tsamo T., Lacaille-Dubois M.A., Luu B. Bioactive aristolactams from Piper umbellatum/ Biochemistry, 2008. - P. 68.

10. Tsopmo A., Tene M., Kamnaing P., Ayafor J.F., Sterner A.A new Diels-Alder type adduct flavonoids from D. barteri/ J. Nat. Prod., 1999. - P. 62.

11. WHO. Retrieved from WHO traditional medicine strategy [Electronic resource]. - 10.07.2020.- Mode of access: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/WHO_EDM_TRM_.

12. Kumar A. Medicinal plants. – Mittal Publications, 2010.