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## Exploration of phytotherapies common among local communities of rawalakot, district poonch azad jammu and kashmir

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Ethnopharmacology act as bridge among medical, natural, and social sciences with most of its research focusing on chemical, biological, and pharmacological sciences. Medicinal plants are a basic source of health care in the Pearl Valley District Poonch of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a mountainous region of Pakistan. Although some ethnobotanical researches have been carried out in the district, the work reported here is the first field study on medical ethnobotany in Rawalakot area. Information about the therapeutic properties of the medicinal plants was collected from 46 laypeople and 18 herbalists by using an open ended and semistructured questionnaire. The data about the use of plants was recorded into a synoptic table containing ethnobotanical inventory of plants, parts used, therapeutic indication and mode of application or administration. Different ethnobotanical indices were calculated in order to quantify the knowledge on the medicinal plants reported in the study. Our study recorded 136 species of medicinal plants belonging to 45 families. Asteraceae (14 species) was the dominant family in the area, followed by Lamiaceae (11 species), Fabaceae, and Rosaceae (5 species each). Herbaceous plants (55%) were the most used, with leaves (31%) as the most exploited plant part. Decoction (26 species), juice and powder (24 species each) were the most common methods of preparation. The highest use values (UVs) were reported for *Berberis lyceum* and *Ajuga bracteosa* (1.13 each), *Abies pindrow* (1.03), *Prunella vulgaris* and *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (1.00 each). Highest informant consensus (ICF) values were recorded for digestive system diseases (ICF = 0.90), muscular and skeletal system diseases (ICF = 0.89), and mouth/pharynx diseases and diabetes (ICF = 0.86 each). When we compared data of this study with those of other studies carried out in neighboring areas, we observed that the percentage of similarity in uses of plant species ranged from 13.33% to 34.62% with an average value of 22.53%. The present study revealed the importance to document and launch list of all the possible plants that are used in phytotherapies in the unexplored study area. The present study is useful in preservation of indigenous knowledge and could attract future researchers to investigate and explore phytochemicals responsible for medicinal properties of these plants.

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