

Ethno-Botanical Research on Medicinal Plants Commonly Used for Children's Health in South East Nigeria

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Abstract : This research surveys and documents information on medicinal plants and their botanical preparations used in the treatment of children's ailments in South-Eastern Nigeria. Children under the age of 5 in developing countries suffer from diseases with high morbidity and mortality rate yearly due to inaccessible and unaffordable healthcare. Structured questionnaires were administered to herbal sellers, traditional medicine practitioners, nursing mothers, and adult dwellers to collect data on the names of plants used to treat the conditions, methods of preparation, duration of treatment, adverse effects, and the methods of administration of the plant materials. A total of 135 plants belonging to 55 families were identified for the management of children's health in the area. Common pediatric ailments which were said to be treated with herbal remedies by the respondents included malaria, pneumonia, stomach ache, diarrhea, dysentery, measles, chickenpox/smallpox, convulsion, jaundice, pile, ringworm, scabies, eczema, stubborn cough, scurvy, catarrh, wounds, boils, insect bites, food poison, cholera, and umbilical cord complications. Percentages of respondents were; herbal sellers (48.2%), traditional medical practitioners (21.6%), nursing mothers (11.1%), and others (19.1%). The most occurring plant families were Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae, and Apocynaceae, with 8 species of plants each followed by Annonaceae and Asteriaceae with 7 and 6 species, respectively. The recipes were made from the combination of different parts of two or more plant species, and others were made from single plant parts. Methods of extraction were mostly decoction and raw-squeezing out of the juice and infusion, while oral administration was the main route of administration.

Keywords : ethno-botanicals, children's health, medicinal plants, South-Eastern Nigeria

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