

Variation in the Traditional Knowledge of *Curcuma longa* L. in North-Eastern Algeria

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Abstract : *Curcuma longa* L. (Zingiberaceae), commonly known as turmeric, has a long history of traditional uses for culinary purposes as a spice and a food colorant. The present study aimed to document the ethnobotanical knowledge about *Curcuma longa* and to assess the variation in the herbalists' experience in Northeastern Algeria. Data were collected by semi-structured questionnaires and direct interviews with 30 herbalists. Ethnobotanical indices, including the fidelity level (FL%), the relative frequency citation (RFC) and use value (UV) were determined by quantitative methods. Diversity in the knowledge was analyzed using univariate, non-parametric and multivariate statistical methods. Three main categories of uses were recorded for *C. longa*: for food, for medicine and for cosmetic purposes. As a medicine, turmeric was used for the treatment of gastrointestinal, dermatological and hepatic diseases. Medicinal and food uses were correlated with both forms of use (rhizome and powder). The age group did not influence the use. Multivariate analyses showed a significant variation in traditional knowledge, associated with the use value, origin, quality and efficacy of the drug. These findings suggested that the geographical origin of *C. longa* affected the use in Algeria.

Keywords : curcuma, indices, knowledge, variation

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