

The State of Research on Medicinal Plants in Morocco

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Abstract : The two great realms of living diversity are cultural and biological. Today, both are being lost at an alarming rate. Of all the Earth's biological diversity, plant kingdom is of high significance, and most essential to human welfare, in fact, medicinal plants are extensively exploited for countless purposes. Among these multiple uses, medicinal plants are the most important source of medicine for humankind healthcare and well being. In recent years there has been a great surge of public interest in the use of herbs and plants. Some scientists have viewed this phenomenon as a modern "herbal renaissance". The importance of plants as medicines in developed and developing countries has recently been acknowledged by the United Nations (UN). However, to date fewer than 5% of the approximately 250,000 species of higher plants have been exhaustively studied for their potential pharmacological activity. A number of drugs from ethnobotanical leads have provided significant milestones in Western medicine. Despite this success, pharmacognosy research on Moroccan flora needs more studies aimed at the exploration of their therapeutic potential. A major weakness is the absence of strong funding agencies in the country, and a real national drug discovery program. Moreover, the lack of the coordination between different universities and research institutions leads, in most cases, to a waste of time, money and efforts of many researchers. In this work, we focus our attention on research into traditional indigenous medicinal plants in Morocco. Three parts constitute the head lines of this work: In the first one, we take up Moroccan biodiversity matter, the second part is devoted principally to the state of research into medicinal plants by Moroccan scholars and the last one is consecrated to the debate of factors which handicap the progress of research on phytomedicine in Morocco. The objectives of the present study are twofold: first, to highlight the state of the medicinal plants researches in Morocco. Second goal is to assess and correlate the levels of knowledge of the local flora to the research on medicinal plants to attempt to build capacity for research within Moroccan Scientific community at rate of developing country.

Keywords : Morocco, medicinal plants, ethnobotanical, pharmacognosy, phytomedicine

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