Herbal abortifacients used in North Maharashtra

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Abstract

Present study was carried out to document plant-based preparations used as abortifacient in three district of North Maharashtra. Data were collected by interviewing local traditional medicinemen, tribals as well as rural people of different villages. A total of twenty claims were obtained. Information on local names, plant parts and different forms of preparations used were also recorded and are reported in the present paper.

Keywords: Abortifacient, Medicinal plants, Ethnomedicine, North Maharashtra.

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Introduction

Maharashtra is the abode of a number of ethnic groups and diverse cultures. Descendents of nearly all ethnic groups have preserved a considerable part of their traditional knowledge through word of mouth. In the recent past, much attention has been paid to record folk medicines through ethnobotanical field studies and consequently a large number of reports on medicinal plants used by various tribal and rural populations of Maharashtra have been published[1-5]. The districts bordering north boundary of Maharashtra State, viz. Jalgaon, Dhule and Nandurbar constitute the North Maharashtra region[6]. Literature review revealed that extensive ethnobotanical studies on this region have been done[7-10] but documentation of abortifacient plants used in this area has not been done. Hence, the plants used for inducing abortion are reported in present paper.

Methodology

An ethnomedicinal survey was conducted in three districts of North Maharashtra, viz. Jalgaon, Dhule and Nandurbar. These districts are inhabited by *Bhil*, *Tadvi*, *Pawara*, *Kokani*, and other tribes. Regular visits were made to rural areas of each district during the period 2002-2004. The information was also collected from traditional healers locally known as *Vaidyas* (males) or *Daiyas* (females) and tribal people who are having knowledge of herbal medicine for abortion. The fresh specimens of the plants were collected and identified with the help of Flora of Dhule and Nandurbar districts[11] and deposited in the Department of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry, College of Pharmacy, Chopda.

Rhynchosia minima

The botanical name, family, local name, plant parts used and method to induce abortion are given in Table 1.

Conclusion

In the present paper 20 angiospermic species belonging to 19 genera and 14 families collected from three districts of North Maharashtra have been reported. However, there are some unexplored and under explored regions which need further attention and documentation. In recent years, ethnomedicinal studies received much attention as this brings to light the numerous little known and unknown medicinal virtues especially of plant origin. They obviously deserve evaluation on modern scientific lines such as phytochemical analysis, biological screening, pharmacological investigation and clinical trials.

Annona squamosa

Abrus precatorius

Tephrosia purpurea

Nerium indicum

Table 1 : Abortifacient plants used in North Maharashtra

S. No.	Botanical Name/ Family	Local Name	Parts used	Method of use
1.	***Abrus precatorius* Linn.** Fabaceae	*Gunj*	Seeds	A thin paste obtained by grinding seeds with water is applied on external genitalia.
2.	***Achyranthes aspera* Linn.** Amaranthaceae	*Aghada*	Roots	A paste prepared from roots is applied on abdomen.
3.	***Amaranthus spinosus* Linn.** Amaranthaceae	*Mutla*	Leaves	30ml decoction of whole plant is given orally thrice a day for 5-8 days.
4.	***Annona squamosa* Linn.** Annonaceae	*Sitaphal*	Seeds	Seed powder is given empty stomach for five days.

S. No.	Botanical Name/ Family	Local Name	Parts used	Method of use
5.	***Aristolochia bracteolata* Lam.** Aristolochiaceae	*Gindhan*	Whole plant	A thin paste prepared is given orally (10g) twice a day for 3 days.
6.	***Bauhinia racemosa* Lam.** Caesalpiniaceae	*Apta*	Stem bark	15g paste prepared by pounding the bark with water is given orally twice a day for 7 days.
7.	***Calotropis gigantea* (Linn.) R.Br.** /Asclepiadaceae	*Rui*	Roots	Root paste (20g) is given orally once a day for 3 days.
8.	***Calotropis procera* (Ait.) R.Br.**	*Tambadi Rui*	Juice	15g of root paste is given orally once a day for 3 days.
9.	***Carica papaya* Linn.** Caricaceae	*Papai*	Latex of raw fruit	20 ml of latex of raw fruit is given orally once a day for three days.
10.	***Celosia argentea* Linn.** Amaranthaceae	*Kurdu*	Roots	Root paste (10g) is given orally once a day for 6 days.
11.	***Cynodon dactylon* Pers.** Poaceae	*Durva*	Entire plant	20-30 ml extract of whole plant is given once a day for 5 days.
12.	***Gloriosa superba* Linn.** Liliaceae	*Bachnag*	Roots	25 ml of root extract is given orally twice a day for 6 days.
13.	***Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn.** Malvaceae	*Jaswand*	Stem bark	25 ml of stem bark extract given orally twice a day for three days.
14.	***Lawsonia inermis* Linn.** Lythraceae	*Mehandi*	Leaves	A paste prepared from leaves is given orally once a day for 5 days.
15.	***Moringa oleifera* Lam.** Moringaceae	*Shewaga*	Flowers	10g churna of dried flowers is given orally thrice a day for 5 days.
16.	***Nerium indicum* Mill.** Apocynaceae	*Kanher*	Leaves	20 ml of decoction of leaves is given orally twice a day for 4 days.
17.	***Rhynchosia minima* (Linn.) DC.** Fabaceae	*Turvel, Dhaktar anghevda*	Leaves	20 ml of decoction is given twice a day for 7 days.
18.	***Sesbania sesban* (Linn.) Merr.** Fabaceae	*Shevari*	Seeds	15 g seed paste is given orally thrice a day for 5 days.
19.	***Smithia conferta* J. E. Sm.** Fabaceae	*Bhaji*	Leaves	Leaves extract (20-25ml) is given orally twice a day for 7 days.
20.	***Tephrosia purpurea* (Linn.) Pers.** Fabaceae	*Unhali*	Leaves	10 ml of leaf extract is given orally thrice a day for 7 days.

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