Antimalarial herbal remedies of Msambweni, Kenya.

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Source

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Abstract

Malaria is a serious cause of mortality globally. The disease is of regional concern in Africa and of national interest in Kenya due to its high morbidity and mortality as a result of development of resistant strains of Plasmodium falciparum to many existing drugs such as chloroquine. Alternative medicine using herbal remedies are commonly used to treat malaria in Kenya. However, plants used in some rural areas in Kenya are not documented. Many antimalarial drugs have been derived from plants. This study was conducted to document medicinal plants that are traditionally used by the Msambweni community of Kenyan South Coast to treat malaria, where the disease is endemic. Herbalists were interviewed by administration of semistructured questionnaires in order to obtain information on medicinal plants traditionally used for the treatment of malaria. Focused group discussions held with the herbalists supplemented the interview and questionnaire survey. Twenty-seven species of plants in 24 genera distributed in 20 families were reported to be used in this region for the treatment of malaria. Labiatae, Rutaceae and Liliaceae families had each eleven percent of the plant species reported and represented the species that are most commonly used. Thirteen plant species, namely; Aloe deserti Berger (Liliaceae), Launea cornuta (Oliv and Hiern) C. Jeffrey (Compositae), Ocimum bacilicum L. (Labiatae), Teclea simplicifolia (Eng) Verdoon (Rutaceae), Gerranthus lobatus (Cogn.) Jeffrey (Cucurbitaceae), Grewia hexaminta Burret. (Tiliaceae), Canthium glaucum Hiern. (Rubiaceae), Amaranthus hybridus L. (Amaranthaceae), Combretum padoides Engl and Diels. (Combretaceae), Senecio syringitolius O. Hoffman. (Compositae), Ocimum suave Willd (Labiatae), Aloe macrosiphon Bak. (Liliaceae) and Laudolphia buchananii (Hall.f) Stapf. (Apocynaceae) are documented from this region for the first time for the treatment of malaria. These results become a basis for selection of plants for further pharmacological, toxicological and phytochemical studies in developing new plant based antimalarial drugs.

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PMID:
20096761
[PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]