



Integrating Indigenous Medicinal Knowledge and Contemporary Obstetric Practice in Algeria: An Ethnobotanical Analysis

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Abstract

The use of indigenous medicinal knowledge remains a feature of maternal healthcare in Algeria, often existing alongside contemporary obstetric services. A systematic evidence base detailing the specific plants used, their applications, and the views of practitioners and service users is required. This study aimed to document and analyse the indigenous medicinal plants used for obstetric and gynaecological purposes in a defined Algerian region, and to explore perspectives on integrating this knowledge with mainstream obstetric care. A qualitative, ethnobotanical study was conducted using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Participants included recognised traditional healers and women of reproductive age who had used such treatments. Plant specimens were collected, identified, and vouchered. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data. Forty-seven plant species from 25 families were documented for treating conditions including postpartum recovery, menstrual disorders, and labour facilitation. A prominent theme was the use of these remedies primarily for non-acute, wellness-oriented purposes, rather than for managing obstetric emergencies. A significant proportion of interviewed women reported concurrent use of herbal preparations and antenatal clinic services. Indigenous phytotherapy for obstetric care in Algeria is extensive and serves largely as a complementary system for maternal wellbeing, not as a direct alternative to biomedical intervention for acute complications. Obstetric training programmes should incorporate culturally sensitive education on commonly used, low-risk ethnobotanicals. Further pharmacological research on the safety and efficacy of the most cited plants is needed to inform integrative health policy. Ethnobotany, maternal health, traditional medicine, integrative care, Algeria, medicinal plants This original research provides a systematic catalogue of indigenous Algerian plants used in obstetrics and offers evidence-based insight for developing culturally competent maternal healthcare.

Keywords: *ethnobotany, maternal healthcare, Maghreb, traditional medicine, medical pluralism, indigenous knowledge systems*



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