

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**HERBAL MEDICINE USE AND CURRENT
TRENDS AMONG GENERAL PUBLIC**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Worldwide, there is an upward pattern in herbal medicine use. However, if these herbal medicines are being consumed in an unhealthy trend, they may pose risks to consumers. The present study aimed to assess the current trends on herbal medicine use among general public in the main cities of Malaysia, namely Shah Alam, Klang, Subang, and Kuala Lumpur.

Methods: A questionnaire-based, cross-sectional study was conducted. Respondents were randomly selected in the main cities of Malaysia, namely Shah Alam, Klang, Subang, and Kuala Lumpur. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and Chi-square test was applied where appropriate.

Results: Out of the 147 respondents participated in the study, 68.3% (68.3%) had consumed herbal medicines in the past 12 months. Most respondents (82.6%) had consumed herbal medicines without healthcare providers' recommendation. Furthermore, 54.4% chose friends as their main source of information on herbal medicines. 43% of the respondents perceived herbal medicine use as somewhat important. Majority also agreed these medicines can improve health-related quality of life (HRQOL) (78.2%) and to some extent that the medicines can reduce severity of illness (52%). Tea made from *Camellia sinensis* were ranked as the most consumed herbal medicine among the respondents (25.9%) and most respondents consumed herbal medicines to maintain general health (38.8%).

Conclusion: Herbal medicine is widely used by the public in Malaysia, especially *C. sinensis* tea. This study highlights an unhealthy trend in self-prescription of herbal medicine consumption without healthcare providers' recommendation. There is also a need for healthcare professionals to monitor herbal medicine consumption.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter One elucidates the background and problem statement of the study. It also includes the objective of the study and research question in addition to the significance of the study. The scope of the study, expected outcomes, and hypothesis were also briefly explained in this chapter.

1.2 Background of Study

As early as 3 000 BC, herbs have been recognized for their medicinal properties and therefore, has been used as cures in the treatment of various illnesses. This has been proven by the discovery of papyrus writings of ancient Chinese and Egyptians (1). To date, herbs are valued for their culinary as well as medicinal properties. They are still being used to treat various ailments alongside with modern medicines (2).

Malaysia, a multi-racial and multi-cultural country has also been using herbs as cures regardless of ethnicity. The Malays are known for their jamu, the Chinese are known for their traditional Chinese medicines, and the Indians with their Ayurveda system. The Malays are also known for the practice of traditional