

Medicinal plants traded in traditional markets of southern part of Guizhou, Southwest China

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Traditional herbal markets have existed in China for many centuries, especially in the rural areas [1]. Ethnobotanical market survey is often adopted for documenting herbal plants and associated traditional knowledge. Over 3000 species of higher plants occur in southern part of Guizhou, southwest China. This area is well-known for its cultural diversity. Miao, Dong, Buyi, Yao, Shui, Maonan and other ethnic groups live in this region. Almost all ethnic people in the region depend on local medicinal markets for medicinal treatment and family healthcare. However, information on the market traded medicinal plants is not well documented from traditional medicinal markets in southern Guizhou. The study aimed to document medicinal plants traded by local people in the periodic markets. A total of 387 medicinal plant species, belong to 309 genera and 123 families, were investigated and collected together with their medicinal uses by the local people. The plants were used to treat 256 human diseases. Of the 387 species, 234 (60.47%) were obtained from the wild whereas 71 (18.35%) were from home gardens, and 82 (21.19%) species were from both home gardens and wild habitats. Herbaceous species (247) were the most utilized plants, accounting for 63.82% of the species, followed by shrubs (59, 15.25%). Fabaceae came out as a leading family with 25 medicinal species (6.46%) while Asteraceae (5.94%) followed with 23 species. The most frequently used plant parts were the whole plants (148), followed by roots (84). Decoction was a widely used method to prepare traditional herbal medicines. Our research results indicated that the study area might be probably one of the richest diversity centers in both species and cultural level of the country's ethnomedicines, to compare with other parts of China [2 – 4]. The medicinal plants which spontaneously sold in the open air markets are collected by the local people from wild and their living environment, even the toxic plants. There is at risk of ingesting toxic plants sold in popular markets, because there is no hard distinction between medicinal and toxic plants. The local government should regulate the traditional markets for misusing of the herbal medicine and protecting the local biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge.

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Keywords: Medicinal plants, traditional knowledge, periodic market, southern part of Guizhou, medical ethnobotany.

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