



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 6, SPECIAL ISSUE

ABSTRACT

Public Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards Herbal Medicines; A cross-sectional study in Palestine

Bisan Katbeh, Razan Sa'd, Rawan Ma'ali, Dania Radaydeh, Karam Zagharneh, Ibrahim Ghannam

Palestine, Al-Quds University, Faculty of Health Professions, Medical Laboratory Sciences Department.

Background: Traditional medicine, with its cornerstone in herbal remedies, has maintained widespread popularity for centuries and continues to be relevant today. Its versatility and potential benefits, such as affordability and reduced side effects, make it a compelling option. However, it's important to acknowledge that its effectiveness can vary depending on the condition it is used to treat.

Objective: This research aims to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Palestinian communities towards herbal medicine.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using social media platforms such as Facebook. A calculated sample size of 532 subjects aged 18 and above, representing both genders, was recruited using a convenient sampling approach. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, Chi square, and binary logistic regressions.

Results: The results indicated that the majority of participants (71.6%, n=381) reported using herbal medicine. An overwhelming proportion (87.9%, n=334) agreed that herbal treatments can maintain and promote health ($p < 0.001$). However, a considerable number of participants, particularly women (76.5%, n=407), believed that overusing herbs can



have negative effects ($p=0.015$). Notably, while a majority of surveyed health professionals (63%, $n=336$) disagreed that herbal treatments are always safe ($p=0.038$), a significant subset (37%, $n=196$) agreed that they are superior to conventional medicine ($p=0.005$). Surprisingly, a substantial percentage (77.1%, $n=410$) reported a tendency to use herbs as a first-line treatment when ill. Nevertheless, over half of the participants (53.8%, $n=286$) agreed that consulting a doctor before using herbs is necessary.

Conclusions: Palestinians have a long history of using herbs, deeply rooted in their cultural heritage. This study reveals a modest awareness of the potential overuse of herbs, particularly among female respondents who show heightened concern and experience in this regard. Interestingly, despite the prevailing attitude that consulting a doctor when using herbs is necessary, this study suggests a significant gap between belief and actual practice.

Keywords: Traditional Medicine, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Palestine.