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Ethnopharmacological survey on medicinal plants used in snake bite treatments in Western and Sabaragamuwa provinces in Sri Lanka**R M Dharmadasa**

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Sri Lanka has great snake diversity and over 40,000 cases reported annually from different agro ecological regions of the country. Since more than 95% of victims are relied on traditional snakebite treatments, there is an urgent necessity in development of traditional snakebite treatment system in Sri Lanka. However, the traditional knowledge on snakebite treatments has been passed generation to generation within their families. Therefore, development of snakebite treatment system in Sri Lanka is hindered by unavailability of required information on types of medicinal plant materials used and other pertinent issues on snakebite treatments. Thus, in the present study, we investigated types of medicinal plant materials required, parts of the plants used for the treatment for different snake bites, treatment types, frequency index, heavily used and rare materials, family wise distribution, challenges faced by traditional practitioners and future prospects. Information was gathered from a total of 74 traditional practitioners from Sabaragamuwa and Western provinces. Data were gathered by face-to-face interviews with traditional practitioners and collected data were tabulated and analyzed. A total of 341 different plant species belonging to 99 families were documented and the highest number of plants were reported from family Fabaceae (32 species). Different parts of the plant such as leaves (53.67%), barks (26.10%), entire plant (14.08%), roots (10.26%), bulbs (8.80%), seeds (7.62%), fruits (6.45%), buds (5.87%), flowers (3.23%), stems (2.93%) and latex (2.05%) were used for the preparation of nine different types of formulae. These formulae include oral administration, external bandaging, oiling for external application, steaming, creaming for wounds, nasal treatments, head treatments, treatment for eyes and washing of wounds. Documented plants together with traditional knowledge could be effectively utilized for isolation and characterization of antivenom for different snake species.