

Abstract

Traditional medicine is defined as the set of traditional knowledge about the uses of plants, practices, treatments and methods shared within the human societies in order to improve the health of its inhabitants. This traditional knowledge has been reduced due to the modern medicine and kept in the most rural areas of Serbia.

Ethnobotanical and sociodemographical data was collected using 100 interviews to the studied area inhabitants between 20 and 61 years old. A 64% of the studied population were women and 36% were men.

The results show that 60 plant species belonging to 23 families are used for medicinal purposes in Central Serbia. The most used families of plants are Asteraceae (12 species, 20%); and Lamiaceae (11 species, 18.33%). Those species are used the most for skin diseases, digestive tract diseases and respiratory diseases. According to the index "MUV", the most used species are *Mentha spicata* and *Ocimum basilicum* (6.66%), *Saturea montana* (5.55%) and *Hypericum perforatum* (5.26%). Regarding the most used parts of the plant, the most popular are the leaves (31.25%) and flowers (21.43%). Medicinal herbs are mostly used in form of infusion (51.38%) and tincture (12.84 %). There is also a consumption as spices (9.17%). The oldest people in the villages still keep the knowledge on the less and less frequent medicinal use of plants. Younger people can hardly identify the traditional uses of them.

That is why the conservation of this traditional knowledge of the plants' applications can be considered important in order to not to lose the valuable heritage that our predecessors left for the future generations.

Key words: *Asteraceae*, Balkan Peninsula, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Saturea montana*, traditional medicine.