

GENERAL AWARENESS ON ALLOPATHIC, AYURVEDIC AND HOMEOPATHIC SYSTEM OF MEDICINE IN CHHATTISGARH, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Herbal drugs constitute a major share of all the officially recognized system of health in India viz. Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy and Naturopathy, except Allopathy. More than 70% of India's 1.1 billion populations still use these non-allopathic systems of medicine. Currently there is no separate category of herbal drugs or dietary supplements, as per the Indian Drugs Act. The common reasons for tilting of common man towards herbal drugs are frustrating side effects and lack of the curative value in modern medicines. The purpose of present study was to document the common traditional medicine practices, assess the local people's preference for traditional medicines (herbal medicine) versus other different systems of medicines and lastly to determine the awareness about the different systems of medicine by local people. Data were collected using semi-structured administered face to face respondents. A total of 492 were interviewed. The responses (492) obtained on the questionnaire sheet have been presented as Bar charts, Pie charts etc depending upon type of response.

Keywords: Allopathy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Awareness, Herbal

INTRODUCTION

India has a very long, safe and continuous usage of many herbal drugs in the officially recognized alternative systems of health viz. Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy and Naturopathy. These systems have rightfully existed side-by-side with Allopathy and are not in 'the domain of obscurity, as stated by Venkat Subramanian¹. Millions of Indians use herbal drugs regularly as spices, home-remedies, health foods as well as over-the-counter (OTC) as self-medication or also as drugs prescribed in the non-allopathic systems². The more than 500,000 non-allopathic practitioners are trained in the medical colleges (>400) of their respective systems of health and are registered with the official councils which monitor professionalism. Hence, these systems are not folklore or traditional herbal practices. There are basic axioms of these systems leading to a logical and systematic structure of pathogenesis and diagnosis, which serves also as a determinant for therapy³.

Over three-quarters of the world population relies mainly on plants and plant extracts for health care. It is estimated that world market for plant derived drugs may account for about Rs. 2, 00,000 crores and presently Indian contribution is less than Rs. 2000 crores. Indian export of raw drugs has steadily grown at 26% to Rs.165 crores in 1994-95 from Rs.130 crores in 1991-92. The annual production of medicinal and aromatic plant's raw material is worth about Rs.200 crores. This is likely to touch US \$1150 by the year 2000 and US \$5 trillion by 2050.

Of the 2, 50,000 higher plant species on earth, more than 80,000 are medicinal. India is one of the world's 12 biodiversity centers with the presence of over 45000 different plant species.

India's diversity is unmatched due to the presence of 16 different agro-climatic zones, 10 vegetation zones, 25 biotic provinces and 426 biomes (habitats of specific species). Of these, about 15000-20000 plants have good medicinal value. However, only 7000-7500 species are used for their medicinal values by traditional communities.

In India, drugs of herbal origin have been used in traditional systems of medicines such as Unani and Ayurveda since ancient times. The Ayurveda system of medicine uses about 700 species, Unani 700,

Siddha 600, Amchi 600 and modern medicine around 30 species. About 8,000 herbal remedies have been codified in Ayurveda. The Rigveda (5000 BC) has recorded 67 medicinal plants, Yajurveda 81 species, Atharvaveda (4500-2500 BC) 290 species, Charak Samhita (700 BC) and Sushrut Samhita (200 BC) had described properties and uses of 1100 and 1270 species respectively, in compounding of drugs and these are still used in the classical formulations in the Ayurvedic system of medicine ⁴⁻¹⁹.

Present study judges the awareness/knowledge of common man regarding different systems of medicine.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

A questionnaire was drafted among 492 people of different areas of Chhattisgarh. The language was kept very simple so that there is no problem in understanding the spirit of question. The objectives were duly explained to each and every respondent and doubts, if any, were clarified. Questions and their responses (total 492) are being presented as Bar charts, Pie charts etc depending upon the type of response.

Questionnaire & Observations:

1. Are you aware of traditional system of medicine?
2. Among these which system of medicine you prefer?
3. Which system of medicine you prefer in case of emergency?
4. Do you have full faith on vendor selling herbal drugs?
5. In your view a common man tilting towards which system of medicine?
6. In which system of medicine you found more side effects?
7. Which system of medicine you prefer after allopathic?
8. For a long term disease which system of medicine you prefer?
9. In your view which system of medicine you feel convenient to use?
10. Any major diseases in your family?

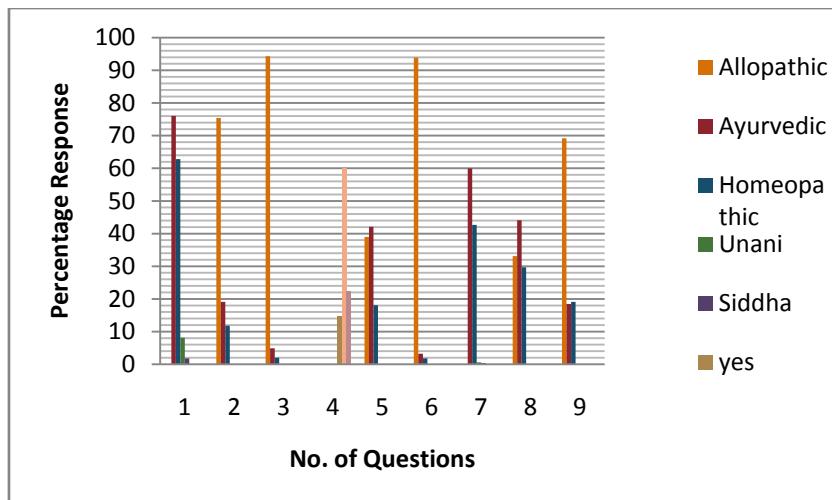


Fig. 1: Following bar diagram shows responses of people in percentage to the above questions

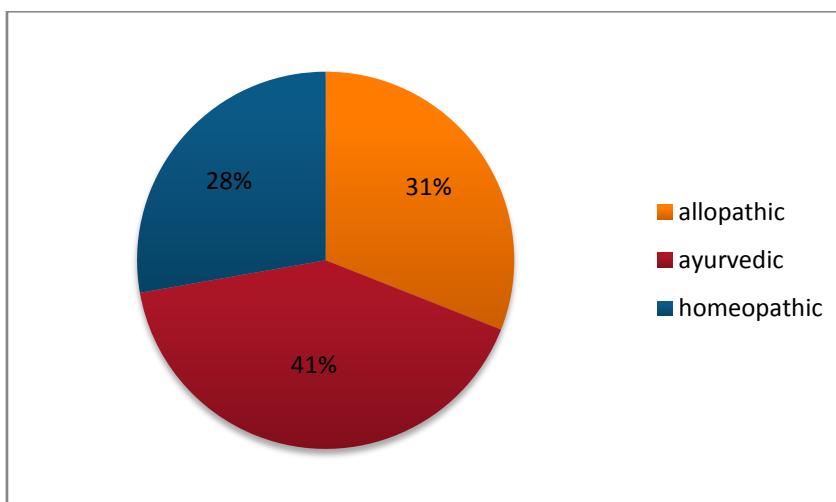


Fig. 2: Which system of medicine is better?

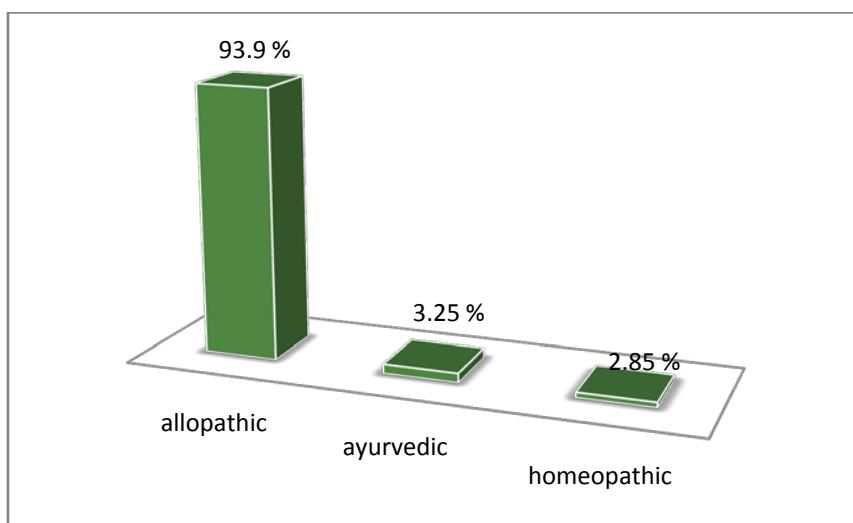


Fig. 3: Which system of medicine you prefer in case of emergency?

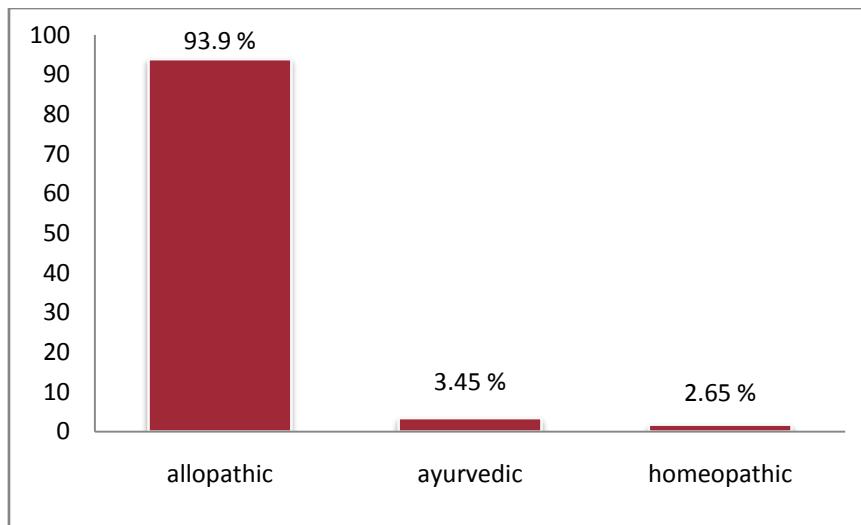


Fig. 4: In which of system of medicine you found more side effects?

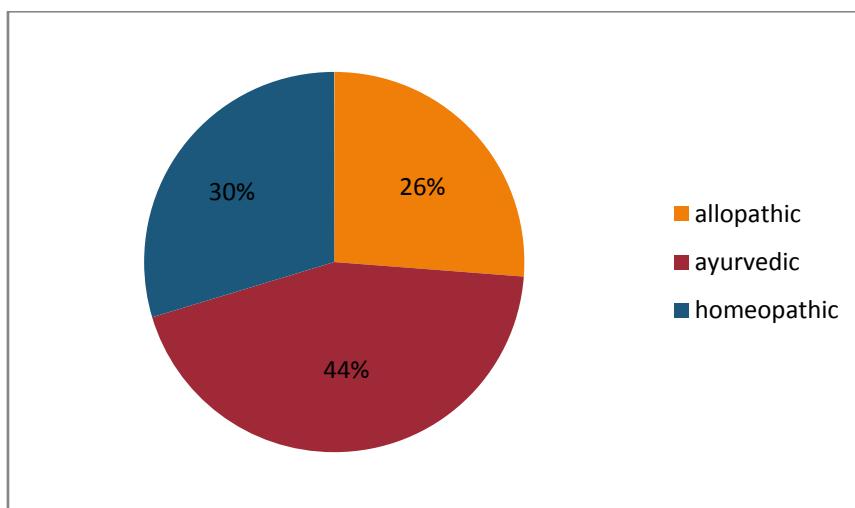


Fig. 5: For a long term disease which system of medicine you prefer?

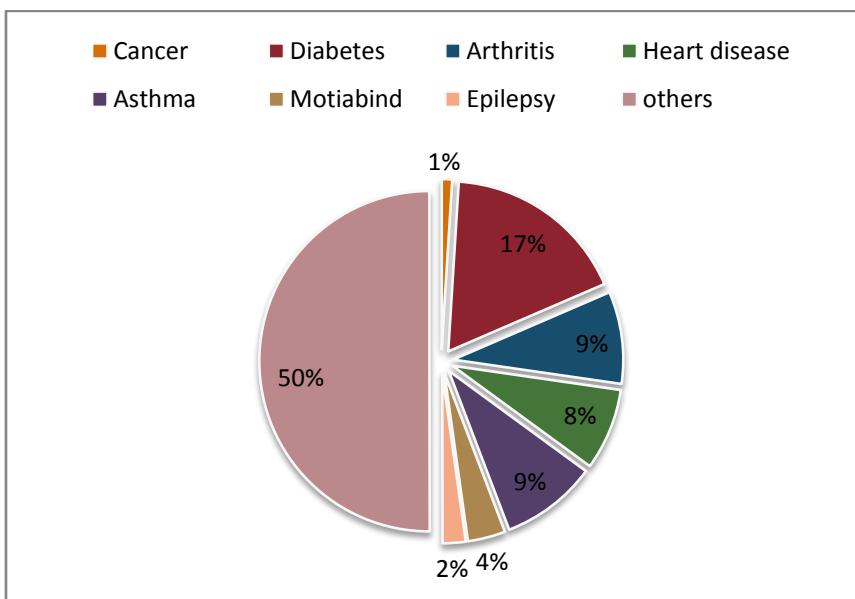


Fig. 6: Major diseases found in family

Future prospects of herbal medicine market

It is estimated that nearly three fourths of the herbal drugs used worldwide were discovered following leads from local medicine. According to WHO about 25% of modern medicines are descended from plants first used traditionally. Many others are synthetic analogues built on prototype compounds isolated from plants. Almost, 70% modern medicines in India are derived from natural products. The basic uses of plants in medicine will continue in the future, as a source of therapeutic agents, and as raw material base for the extraction of semi-synthetic chemical compounds such as cosmetics, perfumes and food industries. Popularity of healthcare plant-derived products has been traced to their increasing acceptance and use in the cosmetic industry as well as to increase public costs in the daily maintenance of personal health and well being. In the dual role as a source of healthcare and income, medicinal plants make an important contribution to the larger development process. Though the efficacy of herbal requires development of quality consciousness in respect of the evaluation related evidences, supplying the demand for botanicals and herbals is a booming business. Recently even developed countries, are using medicinal systems that involve the use of herbal drugs and remedies. Undoubtedly the demand for plant derived products has increased worldwide. The demand is estimated to grow in the years to come fuelled by the growth of sales of herbal supplements and remedies. These herbal drugs and Indian medicinal plants are also rich sources of beneficial compounds including antioxidants and components that can be used in functional foods. Newer approaches utilizing collaborative research and modern technology in combination with established traditional health principles will yield rich dividends in the near future in improving health, especially among people who do not have access to use the costlier western systems of medicine. This means that scientists, doctors and pharmaceutical companies will be looking at countries like China, India, etc. for their requirements, as they have the most number of medicinal plant species and are the top exporters of medicinal plants.

RESULT

According to the survey report (492 respondents) 41% people were satisfied with the efficacy of ayurvedic drugs. In spite of general tilt towards herbal drugs, a large portion of population up to 93.9% prefers allopathic medicine in case of emergency, 3.25% go for ayurvedic and 2.85% prefer homeopathic system of medicine. In general public opinion it was found that 93.9% of people experience more side effects in allopathic medicines, 3.45% in ayurvedic medicine and only 2.65% in homeopathic medicine. In case of long term disease 44% prefer ayurvedic system of medicine, 30% prefer allopathic and 26% go for homeopathic medicine. For allopathic medicines 62.19% people said it is convenient to use, 19.32% prefer homeopathic and only 18.49% people prefer ayurvedic medicines. According to the percentage wise distribution of different major diseases in the inquired family's diabetes was found to be the dominating disease.

DISCUSSION

The most common sources of information, on herbal drugs, are TV, Newspaper, Books and Family friends. The single most common

reason for preferring herbal drugs is- firm belief that these do not have any side effects. These drugs are usually procured from Pan sari shops, Kitchen, Kitchen garden and sometimes the municipal gardens/parks. Pharmacist can play a pivotal role in increasing their use by educating the people regarding benefits of these drugs. Government policies should not only promote their use but should also have strict control on standards and quality of these drugs. These can be made duty free to make easily affordable by masses. Such a situation will pave the way to reap the benefits of all system minus the frustrating side effects of medicines.

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