

MEDICINAL HERBS USED IN MANAGEMENT OF MALARIA IN PAMOTAN VILLAGE COMMUNITY, KALIPUCANG DISTRICT, PANGANDARAN REGENCY, WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate medicinal plants used to treat malaria by a society in Pamotan village, Pangandaran Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The work was conducted using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method, which is an assessment process-oriented to active community involvement in the form of direct interview activities. Information was collected by interviewing respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire. Interviews were directed to the plants used to prevent and overcome malaria by referring to the list of questions which included the local name of the plant, the part used and the method of preparation and administration. A total of 47 respondents were interviewed of which 43% were females and 57% males. Results indicated that thirteen species of plants belonging were used to treat malaria by the villagers of Pamotan. The three plants that have the highest citation frequency are bitter herbs (*Andrographis paniculata* Ness.) 35.71%, papaya leaves (*Carica papaya* L.) 21.43%, and cut leaf ground cherry whole plants (*Physalis angulata* L.) 21.43%. The most common preparation method is decoction and the route of administration is oral. It is concluded that the Pamotan villagers in Pangandaran district, Indonesia, still use ingredients from plants as complementary medicine to treat malaria.

Keywords: Ethnopharmacology, Pamotan village, Antimalarial herbs

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INTRODUCTION

Malaria is a tropical disease caused by the parasite *Plasmodium sp.*, which can infect humans through the bite of female mosquitoes of *Anopheles sp* [1]. The types of plasmodium that can cause malaria in humans are *P. falciparum*, *P. vivax*, *P. ovale*, *P. malariae* and *P. knowlesi*. *P. falciparum* is the most deadly *Plasmodium* type of malaria [2-4]. Globally, malaria is still a significant health problem because this disease affects a sizable population in the world. WHO reports that in 2017 there were around 219 million cases of malaria with a mortality rate of 435,000 [5].

The global commitment of leaders of the member states of the nations in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) began in September 2000, placing efforts to eradicate malaria in the seventh MDGs goals, which is to eradicate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. This commitment continued with SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) with a validity period from January 2016 to December 2030. The objectives to be achieved by the SDGs include improvements in health and welfare, such as stopping HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other tropical diseases epidemics [6, 7].

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia reported in the 2016 Indonesian Health Profile, the level of malaria endemicity in Indonesia in 2016, showed that only 48.1% of districts/cities were certified free of malaria [6]. The West Java Provincial Health Office in the West Java Provincial Health Profile in 2016, reported that the Malaria Morbidity or API (Annual Prevalence Incidence) for West Java in 2016 was 0.211 ‰. Regions in West Java that are still malaria-endemic areas are Sukabumi Regency, Garut Regency, Tasikmalaya Regency and Pangandaran Regency [8].

Pamotan Village, Kalipucang District, Pangandaran Regency is a village that has a history of being a high malaria-endemic area (until 2012, Pamotan Village, Kalipucang District is within the area of Ciamis Regency). Malaria cases in Pamotan began to increase in 1998 with 25 patients found, all positive for *Plasmodium falciparum* infection due to local transmission. Until 2005, the number of sufferers continued to increase and included strata of high case incidence or HCl [9]. The cause is a high population mobilization because Pangandaran district is a tourist area with natural fishing attractions, bordering directly with the high malaria-endemic areas of the Cilacap Regency, Central Java Province, and the environmental

conditions that allow for the life and development of *Anopheles spp.* Potential breeding sites for malaria vectors are river and lagoon estuaries, brackish water paddies, ponds, small ripples in the soil around the estuary and open waters in mangrove forests that continue to expand because the trees are turned into firewood in the process of processing coconut sugar [10].

Malarial drug resistance is the ability of parasites to continue to live in the human body, reproduce and cause symptoms of the disease even though it has been given regular treatment both with standard doses and with higher doses that can still be tolerated by drug users [11]. *Plasmodium falciparum* resistance to antimalarial drugs is a problem, especially in endemic areas [12]. This can increase morbidity and mortality due to malaria. Resistance occurs mainly because of mutations in *Plasmodium* genes, such as the mutation of '*Plasmodium falciparum* Chloroquine Resistance Transporter' (PfCRT), *Plasmodium falciparum* dihydrofolate reductase (dhfr) and dihydropteroate synthase (dhps) genes [13]. The incidence of *Plasmodium* resistance to malarial drugs such as the quinolone group continues to increase and even now cases of *Plasmodium falciparum* resistance to artemisinin, which is a new generation of malarial drugs recommended by WHO, has been found and the widespread of resistance has encouraged researchers to seek for more effective antimalarial drugs [11].

The use of traditional medicines is an alternative for malarial treatment in endemic countries, such as Indonesia. This is because Indonesia is one of the largest countries rich in biodiversity and marine biota. In addition, the majority of Indonesian people still use plants as traditional medicines because they are believed to have medicinal properties [14].

Ethnopharmacology is the interdisciplinary science that investigates the perception and use of pharmaceuticals, especially traditional medicine, within ethnic society. Ethnic empirical knowledge is different in each region, depending on the distinctive nature and cultural wisdom of each ethnic group [15]. Based on the background above, it is necessary to conduct the ethnobotany survey for antimalarial of plants used by the Sundanese community in Pamotan village, Pangandaran Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia, in order to provide documentation of the plants used by the Pamotan villagers to treat malaria and this is the first step in the search for new malaria medicines from plants.

METHODS

Study area

The ethnopharmacology survey was carried out in Pamotan village, Pangandaran Regency in West Java Province, Indonesia (fig. 1). Pangandaran Regency lies within the latitudes 7° 41' 3.66" S 108°

39' 34.344" E. Pangandaran Regency is one of the endemic areas of malaria in West Java province of Indonesia, and Pamotan village located in the district of Kalipucang has the highest malaria incidence rates in Pangandaran Regency every year. Pamotan village has an area of 5,34 km². There are about 4.097 people living in Pamotan village, or 918,91 people densities per square km [16].

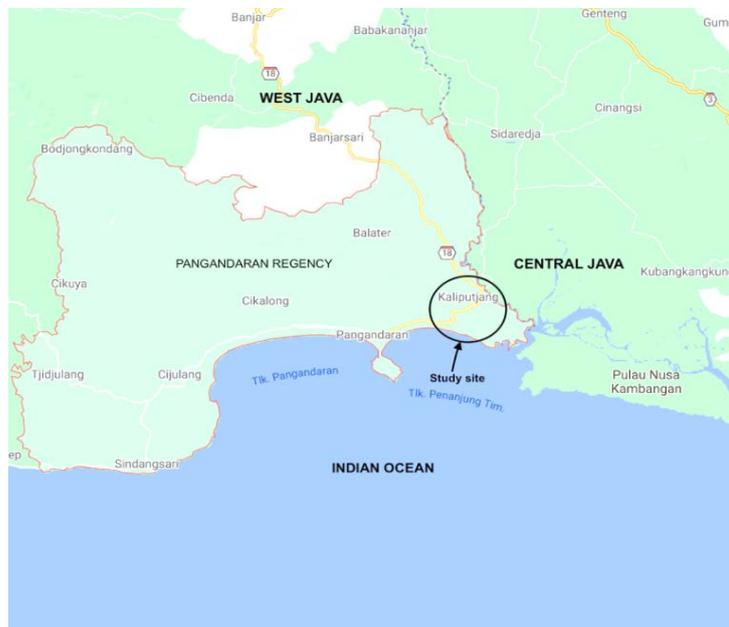


Fig. 1: Map of ethnopharmaceutical study area in Pangandaran Regency, Kalipucang District
(<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pangandaran>)

Ethical approval for the study

Ethical approval for the ethnopharmacology survey was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Commission Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Padjadjaran (1264/UN6. KEP/EC/2019). The participants in this research were provided with information such as the aim of the study, benefits and risk involved. Those who agreed to participate signed a written consent at the beginning of the study.

Ethnopharmacology survey

Ethnopharmacology research in malaria-endemic areas of West Java was carried out using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method, which is an assessment process oriented towards active community involvement, in the form of direct interviews [17]. The survey was carried out from April to May 2019; semi-structured questionnaires were used to interview the local population about their knowledge of herbs used in the treatment of malaria. The selected respondents (inclusion criteria) are adult men or women from Pamotan village, Pangandaran district, who have knowledge about malaria and plants that are traditionally used to treat malaria. The preferred respondents are traditional healers, village leaders, village or sub-district malaria interpreters and people who know about malaria based on experience because they have suffered from malaria or have relatives who have suffered from malaria diagnosed by doctors at the local health center and have used or know plants to help treat malaria. The exclusion criteria were for children (under 18 y of age), adults who did not know about malaria, its symptoms, and did not know about malaria treatment using plant materials and adults with dementia. The basic information needed was collected through conversations during the oral interviews. The data obtained is then analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, including the local name of the plant, the part of the plant used, and the method of use.

The random sampling technique was used in this study. Information such as the demographic structure of the community (age groups,

sex of individuals, occupations, and education level) were generated and respondents gave information on parts of plants used in the treatment of malaria, mode of preparation, source of ethnopharmacological knowledge and source of material plant for medicine preparation [17, 18]. The respondents accompanied the researcher to the field to take pictures and to collect plant materials. The plant samples used by the Pamotan village community based on the survey results were documented in the form of photographs and collected in the field to assist with identification. The collected plant materials were identified and deposited at Herbarium Bandungense Institut Teknologi Bandung. To find out the importance and level of confidence the use of these plants in dealing with malaria, the Frequency of citation (FC) was calculated [19].

The Frequency of citation (FC) for each medicinal plant is calculated using the formula:

$$FC = \frac{\text{the number of times the medicinal herbs were mentioned by respondents}}{\text{the total number of plant species used}} \times 100\%$$

Phytochemical screening

Phytochemical screening is carried out to determine the secondary metabolite group contained in a plant. The secondary plant metabolites tested included alkaloids, flavonoids, polyphenols, quinones, saponins, steroid-triterpenoids, and monoterpenoids-sesquiterpenoids (essential oils). Phytochemical screening was tested on plant material using standard procedure [20, 21].

RESULTS

Respondents of this study are residents of Pamotan village, adults (over 20 y old), know the diseases and symptoms of malaria, and know the plants used to treat malaria. Total number of respondents for this ethnopharmacology survey was 47, and the majority of respondents were male (57%). The distribution of the age, occupation and education level of the respondents is presented in fig. 2-4.

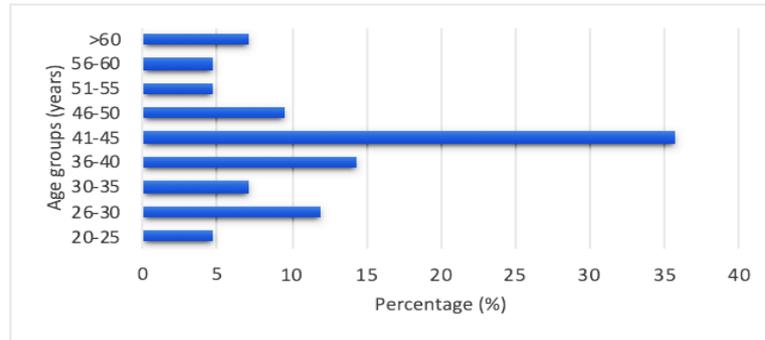


Fig. 2: Age groups of respondents

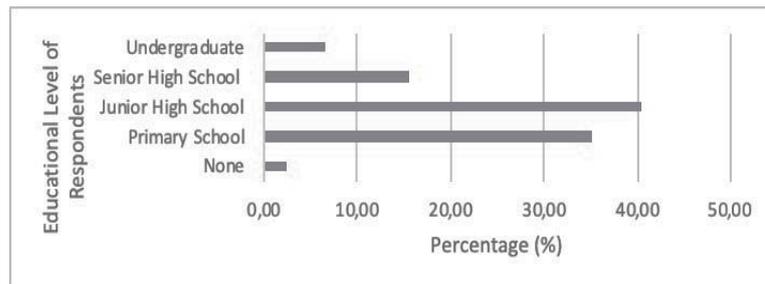


Fig. 3: Educational level of respondents

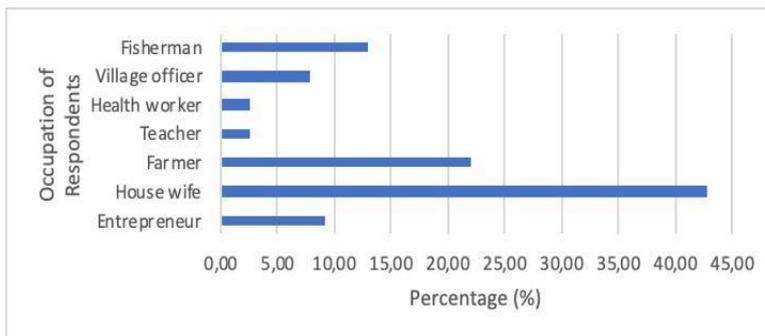


Fig. 4: Occupation of respondents

Community of Pamotan village utilizes medicinal plants majority based on traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation

(69%), and some people gain knowledge of medicinal plants by reading books and through electronic media or being told by friends (fig. 5).

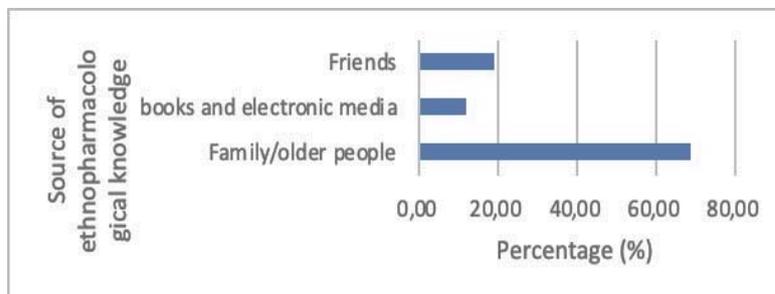


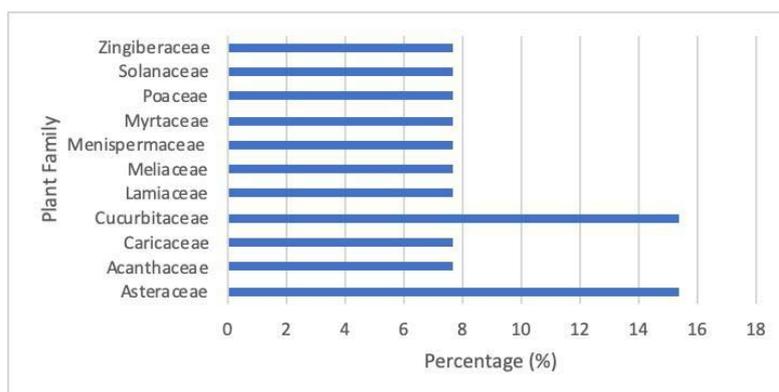
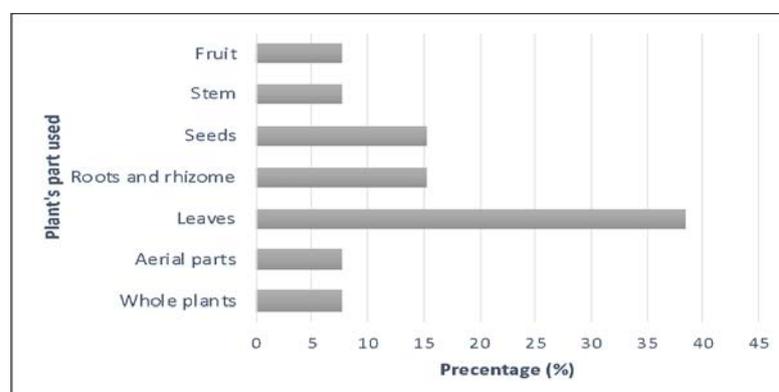
Fig. 5: Source of ethnopharmacological knowledge

The results of the ethnopharmaceutical survey in the form of scientific names, regional names, plant parts used and methods of making drugs used for malaria treatment by Pamotan villagers are presented in table 1. The results of the ethnopharmacology survey in

Pamotan village, Pangandaran Regency showed a total of 13 plants species of plants belonging to 11 family used to treat malaria (fig. 6), and the distribution of plants part used to make a malaria medicine is shown at fig. 7.

Table 1: Medicinal plants used to treat malaria in pamotan village community

| Voucher number | Family | Plant name | Local name | Plant part used | Frequency of citation (%) | Mode of preparation |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 4388/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Acanthaceae | <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> Ness. | Sambiloto, ki oray | Aerial part | 35,7 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Asteraceae | <i>Sonchus arvensis</i> L. | Tempuyung, jombang | Leaves | 4,8 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Asteraceae | <i>Helianthus annuus</i> L. | Bunga Matahari, srangenge | Leaves | 4,8 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Caricaceae | <i>Carica papaya</i> L. | Pepaya, gedang | Leaves | 21,4 | Pound, add cold water and squeezed |
| 4388/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Cucurbitaceae | <i>Luffa acutangula</i> L. | Oyong, emes | Seeds | 16,7 | Dried and drink with cold water |
| 4388/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Cucurbitaceae | <i>Momordica charantia</i> L. | Pare, paria | Fruits | 2,4 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Meliaceae | <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> King. | Mahoni | Seeds | 19,0 | Dried and drink with cold water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Menispermaceae | <i>Tinospora crispa</i> L. | Bratawali | Stem | 16,7 | Boil in water |
| 4388/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Myrtaceae | <i>Psidium guajava</i> L. | Jambu batu beureum | Leaves | 11,9 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Lamiaceae | <i>Plectranthus Scutellarioides</i> (L.) Bth. | Miana, jawer kotok | Leaves | 9,5 | Boil in water |
| 4388/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Poaceae | <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> L. | Alang-alang | Roots | 2,4 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Solanaceae | <i>Physalis angulata</i> L. | Cecendet | Whole plant | 21,4 | Boil in water |
| 4835/II. CO2.2/PL/2019 | Zingiberaceae | <i>Kaempferia galangal</i> L. | Kencur | Rhizome | 2,4 | Pound, add cold water and squeezed |

**Fig. 6: Plant family used in the management of malaria in pamotan village community****Fig. 7: Plants part used in the management of malaria in pamotan village community**

Discovery of antimalarial activity publications in journals was conducted to see whether the plants used by the Pamotan village

community had been examined for their antimalarial activity either *in vitro* or *in vivo*, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Literature review and phytochemical screening for the plants used for management of malaria among the Pamotan village community

| Plant name | Plant part used | <i>In vitro</i> and <i>in vivo</i> antimalarial activity | Phytochemical screening |
|---|-----------------|---|---|
| <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> Ness. | Aerial part | <i>In vitro</i> activity of heme polymerization inhibition: (Extracts were obtained through multilevel extraction) IC ₅₀ n-hexane extract 2196,57 µg/ml IC ₅₀ ethyl acetate extract 1235,54 µg/ml IC ₅₀ ethanolic extract 70% 1157,24 [22]. <i>In vitro</i> activity against 3D7 <i>P. falciparum</i> : IC ₅₀ ethanolic extracts was 7.2 µg/ml [23]. | Alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, saponins, triterpenoids |
| <i>Sonchus arvensis</i> L. | Leaves | No reference | Alkaloids, polyphenols, flavonoids, tannin, quinones |
| <i>Helianthus annuus</i> L. | Leaves | <i>In vitro</i> activity against 3D7 <i>P. falciparum</i> : IC ₅₀ of methanolic extract was 22.18 mg/ml, and ethyl acetate fraction was 16.68 mg/ml [24]. | Alkaloids, polyphenols, monoterpenoids-sesquiterpenoids |
| <i>Carica papaya</i> L. | Leaves | Inhibition percentage against chloroquine-sensitive strain <i>P. falciparum</i> of 150 µg/ml extract was 40,75%. Inhibition percentage against chloroquine resistance strain <i>P. falciparum</i> of 150 µg/ml extract was 50,23% [25]. <i>In vitro</i> activity against 3D7 <i>P. falciparum</i> : IC ₅₀ of the aqueous extract was 166.0±1.23 µg/ml [26]. <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> in mice: Methanolic extract of papaya leaves at 400 mg/kg BW and 200 mg/kg BW showed a dose-dependent and progressive reduction in parasitaemia with time [27]. <i>In vitro</i> activity of heme polymerization inhibition: IC ₅₀ of papaya leaves ethanolic extract was 7.914 mg/ml [28]. | Alkaloids, flavonoids, polyphenols, saponins, triterpenoids |
| <i>Luffa acutangula</i> (L.) Roxb. | Seeds | No reference | Flavonoids, tannins, quinones, saponins, steroids-triterpenoids |
| <i>Momordica charantia</i> L. | Fruits | <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> in mice: The values of Inhibition percentages were 60.39; 86.46 and 100% at 50, 100 and 200 mg/kg BW respectively [29]. Alkaloid rich fraction: IC ₅₀ value of the <i>in vitro</i> test against <i>P. falciparum</i> 3D7 was 0.17 µg/ml. <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> in mice using a suppressive and prophylactic method at a dosage of 100 mg/kg/day was found to inhibit parasites by 74 and 73%, respectively [30]. | Alkaloids, Flavonoids, saponins, steroids-triterpenoids |
| <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> King. | Seeds | No reference | Alkaloids, tannins, saponins, steroids-triterpenoids |
| <i>Tinospora crispa</i> L. | Stems | <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> ANKA in mice Crude extract at doses of 100 and 200 mg/kg BW gave percent inhibition of 35% and 50%, respectively [31]. | Alkaloids, flavonoids, polyphenols, tannins, saponins |
| <i>Psidium guajava</i> L. | Leaves | <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> in mice: Ethanolic extract at 350 mg/kg BW, 750 mg/kg BB dan 1000 mg/kg BW gave Inhibition percentage (%) of 80.2%; 85.8% respectively [32]. <i>In vitro</i> activity IC ₅₀ on <i>P. falciparum</i> : 8 mg/ml [33]. <i>In vitro</i> activity of heme polymerization inhibition: IC ₅₀ of guava leaves ethanolic extract was 8.794 mg/ml [28]. | Alkaloids, polyphenols, flavonoids, tannin, quinones, saponins |
| <i>Plectranthus scutellarioides</i> (L.) Bth. | Leaves | No reference | Flavonoids, polyphenols, quinones, triterpenoids, monoterpenoids-sesquiterpenoids |
| <i>Imperata cylindrica</i> L. | Roots | No reference | Alkaloids, flavonoids, polyphenols, steroids-steroids |
| <i>Physalis angulata</i> L. | Whole plants | <i>In vitro</i> activity against 3D7 <i>P. falciparum</i> : IC ₅₀ of methanolic extract was 1.27 mg/ml (3D7), 3.02 mg/ml (W2), 15.68 mg/ml (WI-38)[34]. <i>In vivo</i> activity against <i>P. berghei</i> in mice on day 9: Ethanolic extract and aqueous extract at 300 mg/kg BW, gave inhibition percentage of 61.2% and 61.8% respectively [34]. <i>In vitro</i> activity against 3D7 <i>P. falciparum</i> of antimalarial compound isolated from <i>Physalis angulata</i> L.: Physalin B IC ₅₀ 2.8 µg/ml Physalin D IC ₅₀ 55 µg/ml Physalin F IC ₅₀ 2.2 µg/ml Physalin G IC ₅₀ 6.7 µg/ml [35] | Alkaloids, polyphenols, flavonoids, tannin, saponins |
| <i>Kaempferia galanga</i> L. | Rhizome | No reference | Flavonoids, polyphenols, saponins, monoterpenoids-sesquiterpenoids |

DISCUSSION

In this study, respondents were 47 respondents consisted of 43% females and 57% males in the age range 21-82 y, and most (51%) were aged over 41 y (fig. 2). This can be understood because older

people are usually more experienced in using plant materials as medicine and have a better knowledge of herbal medicines. The educational level of respondents mostly was a primary school (35%) and junior high school (40%) (fig. 3).

Occupations of the respondents included housewives, entrepreneurs, farmers, teachers, health workers, village employees and fishermen, and the types of occupations of the respondents were mostly housewives (42.9%) (fig. 4). Housewives in Pamotan village are often involved in organizational activities in the village environment, one of which is making a garden that is planted with a variety of plants that are commonly used to treat common diseases in the community, so that the women in Pamotan village recognize and can use plants as medicinal ingredients, including for the treatment of malaria.

Majority of respondents in this study identified fever as the main symptom that is associated with malaria, the other symptoms mentioned included joint pains, nausea, headache, shivering body and diarrhea. Some respondents had experienced malaria or had family members who had had malaria so they know the symptoms of malaria properly.

Knowledge about the use of plants as malaria drugs in Pamotan village community is mostly known by passing down from generation to generation, and now with the development of information technology, this knowledge can be obtained from the internet. Medicinal plants are used as the first alternative step to treat diseases or as a supplement. The cultivated or wild plants are taken directly from the forest or home yard. Majority of the sources of medicinal ingredients are taken from wild plants around the village (52.4%), some are taken from plants which are deliberately planted in the yard (35.7 %) and only a small proportion of them buy medicinal plants (11.9%).

The three plants that have the biggest frequency of citation are bitter herbs (*Andrographis paniculata* Ness.) 35.71%, papaya leaves (*Carica papaya* L.) 21.43%, and cutleaf ground cherry whole plants (*Physalis angulata* L.) 21.43%, as shown in table 1.

There are various methods to prepare antimalarial medicines from plants among the community. The most common preparation identified in this study was boiling plant material (68%) and other methods to prepare antimalarial medicine included dried, pounded and squeezed plant materials. Mostly the plant materials were harvested shortly before use.

Plant parts used by Pamotan village community (as a percentage of total plant parts used) are leaf (38%), stem (8%), fruit (8%), seed (15%), aerial parts (8%), whole plant (8%), root and rhizome (16%). The leaf was the most commonly plant part used in management of malaria in this study, as shown in fig. 7.

Several plants, as shown on the table 2, have been tested for antimalarial and potential to be developed into malaria drugs, included aerial part of *Andrographis paniculata* Ness, *Helianthus annuus* L. leaves, *Carica papaya* L. leaves, *Momordica charantia* L. fruit, *Tinospora crispa* L. stem, and *Psidium guajava* L. leaves. Some plants such as tempuyung leaves (*Sonchus arvensis* L.), angled luffa seeds (*Luffa acutangula* L.), mahogany seeds (*Swietenia macrophylla* King.), miana leaves (*Plectranthus Scutellarioides* (L.) Bth.), alang-alang roots (*Imperata cylindrica* L.), galangal rhizomes (*Kaempferia galanga* L.) have not been tested for their antimalarial activity, but miana leaves (*Plectranthus Scutellarioides* (L.) Bth) and mahogany seeds (*Swietenia macrophylla* King.) are traditionally used to treat malaria or used as an antipyretic [36, 37].

Quinine, the first malaria drug, is an alkaloid compound isolated from the *Cinchona* sp. and artemisinin is the malaria drug currently recommended by WHO which is a lactone sesquiterpene originally isolated from the *Artemisia annua* L. plant [38,39,40]. Based on phytochemical screening result, almost all plant material tested contained alkaloids except angled luffa seeds (*Luffa acutangula* L.), miana leaves (*Plectranthus scutellarioides* (L.) Bth.) leaves, and *Kaempferia galanga* L. rhizomes, while the plants containing monoterpenoid compounds and sesquiterpenoid were sunflower leaves (*Helianthus annuus* L.), miana leaves (*Plectranthus scutellarioides* (L.) Bth.), and *Kaempferia galanga* L. rhizomes.

CONCLUSION

This study was provide the documentation of plants used in management of malaria among the Pamotan village community,

Pangandaran district, Indonesia. People still use plants as medicine because they are easy to get and affordable. The most widely used plant to treat malaria among the community in Pamotan village are bitter herbs (*Andrographis paniculata* Ness.), papaya leaves (*Carica papaya* L.), and cutleaf ground cherry whole plants (*Physalis angulata* L.). Some plants on the list have been tested for their antimalarial activity, however, some other plants have not been tested for their antimalarial activity either *in vitro* or *in vivo*, so it is necessary to examine the antimalarial activity of these plants. The results contributed to the conservation of empirical knowledge of medicinal plants used for the treatment of malaria, but its scientific validation claims of anti-malarial properties is imperative.

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Nil

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors have contributed equally.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Declared none

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