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Social Local Factors that Determine Maintenance of Knowledge on Medicinal Plants Species in the Municipalities of Zetaquirá and Campo Hermoso, Boyacá-Colombia: With an Analysis of the Local Depletion of Plant Species and Suggestions for Preservation

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Abstract

Analyses of the relation of social factors that determine conservation of traditional knowledge on plants species need to be extended in order to understand the reasons that communities have to preserve or on the contrary to deplete local traditional plant species. The main objective of this study was to identify local social factors that promote the knowledge on medicinal plant species in the municipalities of Zetaquirá and Campo Hermoso, Departamento de Boyacá, Colombia, using quantitative and statistical means and to analyse the relation between social factors and the depletion of plant species within the localities. The targeted groups were students and adults from different localities within each municipality. Structured and semistructured interviews were applied. The results indicate that students who inhabit in rural areas far from the core of the municipalities have the tendency to describe a large knowledge on native plant species. In the case of adults, large knowledge was described in the urban area in Zetaquirá, while those groups who inhabit in rural areas described the highest knowledge in Campo Hermoso. Some factors appeared not to be statistically significant. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to mention them here, such as age and the way of transport to reach to the health care centre. The adults between forty to sixty years old were able to describe the largest total number of traditional plant species and their uses.

Social factors identified and the lists of disappeared species, species in danger according to the perception of the interviewees, and the list of the most valuable species (IUV) described during the interviews might be of interest to the design of future projects, that aim to preserve medicinal plants within the studied areas. Agroforestry systems would be an option that could include production of food and medicines based on the interest of the locals.

Keywords: Ethno-botany, social factors, traditional knowledge conservation