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## The Structure of Food and Medicinal Plants Used within Vietnamese Community in Prague, Czech Republic

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### Abstract

Ethnobotany has observed a flourish in the past recent decades. Ethnobotanical study focuses on exchanging, transferring, and appropriating by migrants adapting to new surroundings and changing environments. Always, the first generation of migrants perceived their own food as being traditional and tasty contrary to younger generations which increasingly consume the host country food. It relies on how much their acculturation level is. In the early 1960s, Vietnamese migrated to the Czech Republic and reached a population of over fifty-seven thousand by the year 2013. Vietnam is the most culturally diverse country in South-East Asia and it is home to an enormous diversity of flora and fauna including many endemic species. Therefore, the study of useful plant resources within Vietnamese diaspora in the Czech Republic could bring interesting results and contribute to the international scientific context.

Fifty informants (34 women and 16 men) 21 to 83 years old, living in Prague, were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire during January-March, 2015. Pivot table function in MS Excel and Pearson chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test in SPSS IBM 22 were used to carry out descriptive statistics and correlations between the plant usage and demographic variables.

In total, research participants reported 220 plant species belonging to 76 botanical families being used for food (62.7%), medicinal (5%) or both food and medicinal purposes (32.3%). The most represented families were Fabaceae (17 species), Brassicaceae (15), Cucurbitaceae, Poaceae, Rosaceae, and Rutaceae (11 species each). Fruits, leaves and roots were the most represented plant parts used with the proportion of 39%, 25% and 15% of the total number of citations, respectively. According to plant food categorisation, most plant species are consumed as vegetables (63% of use reports), dessert fruits (24.8%), followed by starch plants, nuts and pulses (4% each). The knowledge and usage of food and medicinal plant were examined as dependent variables; the gender, age and duration of living in Vietnam were named as independent variables. In general, there was no significant correlation between these two variable groups. However, some sub-categories of these variables showed individually significant correlations to each other.

**Keywords:** Ethnobotany, food, medicine, migrants, traditional knowledge