Introduction

Traditional medicine is considered as the first health care system resource in the world, about 80% of people depend on it (1).

The diversity of medicinal plants is very high in Mexico. There are about 30,000 plant species in the country, many of which are not explored in their totality and a high number are endemic species (2).

The health panorama presented in Mexico is inscribed in a social reality characterized by poverty, migration, social and environmental fragmentation. Chiapas has 11 different ethnic groups and hosts a great number of practitioners of the traditional medicine.

Objectives

The main objective of the research was:
• to register the current popular therapeutic use of medicinal plants in the Tzotzil indigenous population in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico

The specific objectives were:
• to create an inventory of the medicinal plants used by the Indigenous group “Tzotzil” in the high lands of Chiapas and
• to analyze the most important cultural species used in each area.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed and tabulated using standard quantitative indices such as Use reports (UR), Informant consensus factor (ICF) and Use value index (UVI) (3).

In this study the level of homogeneity among information collected from diverse informants for plant species in treating a particular disease was calculated by the Informants’ Consensus Factor (ICF) (4).

Study Area

Figure 1. Map of the study area: The high lands of Chiapas Region V (“Los Altos de Chiapas”)

Materials and Methods

The field work was carried out in Chiapas, in the region “Alto Tosil-Tsial”, Mexico from March to October 2016 (Fig 1).

Data was collected from local inhabitants by using semi-structured questionnaires in the Tzotzil language. A total of 59 informants (39% men, 61% women) between 20 and 86 years old were selected by random sampling.

Plant material was collected, pressed then taxonomically identified using The Plant List (2013).

Voucher specimens were deposited in the Herbarium of the Chapingo Autonomous University.

Results

A total of 59 species of medicinal plants, belonging to 55 genera and 37 botanical families were registered for the treatment of 13 disease categories (Tab.1).

The families Asteraceae (with 6 species and UR = 51), Lamiaceae (4, UR = 37) and Lauraceae (4, UR = 21), are the most representative in the study area (Tab. 2).

Informants mostly collected medicinal plants in wild and flat areas 46%. The most used parts of the plant are the leaves (51%) and the most common way to prepare traditional remedies is through infusion (71%) (Fig 2).

Table 1. Socio- demographic characteristics of the 59 informants

Table 2. Disease Category and its Informant Consensus Factor (ICF)

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Conclusion

The species reported and their diversity of use satisfy the basic medical needs of families with socioeconomic deficiencies. A greater number of references to the treated conditions corresponds to gastrointestinal and digestive diseases, which occupies the first place as a cause of mortality in the region.

REFERENCES