

HERBAL DRUG AWARENESS AND RELATIVE POPULARITY IN JAMNER AREA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the awareness, misconceptions and myths about the herbal drugs in rural areas. A sample of 450 persons was assessed by a proper set of questionnaire called proforma by door to door visit. Present study indicates that very little population (36%) is aware about the herbal drugs against a huge population (64%). So the appropriate steps are required to be taken to spread the awareness among the society related to herbal drugs.

KEY WORDS

Awareness, Herbal drugs, Population, Questionnaire, Rural area

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a medical system primarily practiced in India that has been known for nearly 5000 years. It includes diet and herbal remedies, while emphasizing the body, mind and spirit in disease prevention and treatment [1]. The herbal plants are used as medicines in folk and traditional medical practice based on the use of plants and plant extracts. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently defined traditional medicine (including herbal drugs) as comprising therapeutic practices that have been in existence, often for hundreds of years, before the development and spread of modern medicine and are still in use today [2]. Herbal drug constitutes only those traditional medicines which primarily use medicinal plant preparations for therapy [2]. Herbal medicines may be made from the whole plants or a part of the plant, including the bark, stem, root, or seed and can be purchased fresh, dried, in pills, capsules, and in tinctures that are preserved in alcohol, glycerin, or another liquid. Herbal medicines are

also in great demand in the developed world for primary health care because of their efficacy, safety and lesser side effects [3]. India is a vast repository of medicinal plants that are used in traditional medical treatments. Certain herbs have become popular over the last some years, but herbal medicines are still poorly understood by the public, medical practitioners and the media [4]. The various indigenous systems such as Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani and Allopathy use several plant species to treat different ailments [5]. Because of the toxicity and side effects of allopathic medicines, the use of herbal medicine becoming popular. This led to sudden increase in the number of herbal drug manufactures [6].

The present study was conducted to find out the awareness about the herbal drugs in rural areas as the number of herbal drug manufacturers has been increased. The study also assess certain misconceptions, myths into the minds of general public regarding role of Herbal drugs in the treatment of diseases thereby promoting the use of these drugs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design

This was a questionnaire based study involving general public. The study was conducted, over a period of 4 months from July 2011 to October 2011. It was conducted in Jamner Tahsil, Dist Jalgaon (M.S.) India. Four hundred fifty persons (both male and female) in the age group of 18-70 years consisting different educational level responded to the questionnaire by door to door visit.

Material used

A set of questionnaire called proforma was drafted keeping above said objectives, in mind. For each question two choices were given except question no. 1 (Yes or No). The language was kept very simple so as to present no problem in understanding the spirit of question. The objectives were duly explained to each and every respondent and doubts, if any, were clarified.

Subjects

The study included 450 people residing in Jamner Tahsil, Dist Jalgaon (M.S.).

Study setting

This population categorized into two sections based upon a basic question that "Which system of medicine do you prefer in disease condition" as

A] Residents Using Ayurvedic Drugs: This population helps to know their depth of knowledge about the herbal drugs.

B] Residents Not Using Ayurvedic Drugs: with the help of such population, efforts were made to find out the reasons for what they are not using herbal drugs.

Following set of questionnaire was prepared in order to evaluate the use of Herbal drugs in rural areas.

1. Which system of medicine do you prefer in disease condition?
2. Do you think whether herbal products are costly?

3. Do you use herbal medicine?
4. Do you think that herbal products are prepared according to rules and regulation?
5. Do you use herbal cosmetic?
6. Do you think herbal product (Drug/cosmetic) have purity, safety and efficacy?
7. Do you use herbal drugs only for acute conditions?
8. Do you use herbal drugs only for chronic conditions?
9. Do you use herbal drugs for both Acute as well as chronic conditions?
10. Which herbal dosage form do you prefer?

Based upon the information gathered reasons for not preferring the herbal drugs were evaluated. Questions and their responses are being presented.

RESULTS

During the door to door visit, the first basic question was asked that enabled to categorize the population according to different systems of medicine they are using in disease condition. As shown in **figure 1**, more than half population (51%) uses Allopathy, 36% population uses Ayurvedic system of medicine & 13% population uses Homeopathic system of medicine. Interesting fact is that nobody knows about the use of Unani drugs.

It indicates that 36% of population believes to use Ayurvedic drugs and 64% do not believe in use of ayurvedic drugs.

A] Residents using Ayurvedic drugs (36%)

B] Residents not using Ayurvedic drugs (64%)

Residents using Ayurvedic drugs (36%): This population was analyzed by using Q2 to Q9 as mentioned in experimental method, in order to recognize their depth of awareness about the herbal drugs. In response to this, population members responded differently to each question as shown in **figure 2**.

Lastly on asking about dosage form mostly preferred by them it also gives different views as shown in **figure 3**.

Residents not using Ayurvedic drugs (64%):- This population was analyzed by using Q2, Q4 and Q6 as shown in **figure 4** and efforts were made to find out reason for not using herbal drugs.

Figure 1: System of medicine mostly used

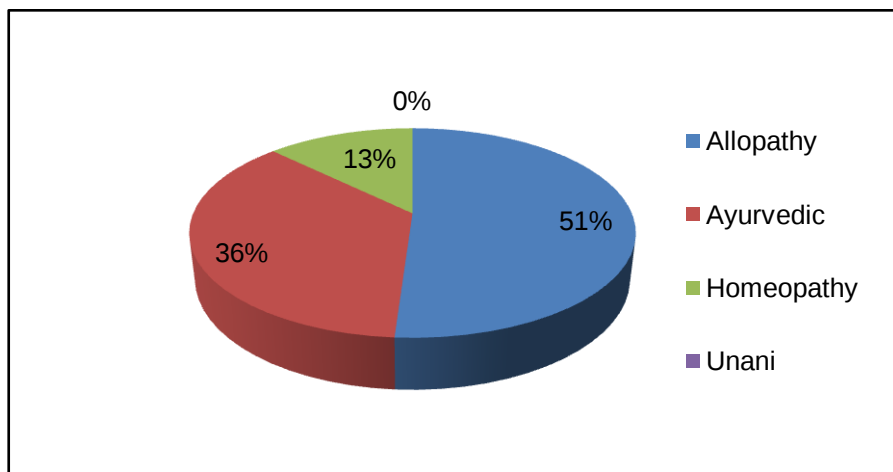


Figure 2: Residents using ayurvedic drugs

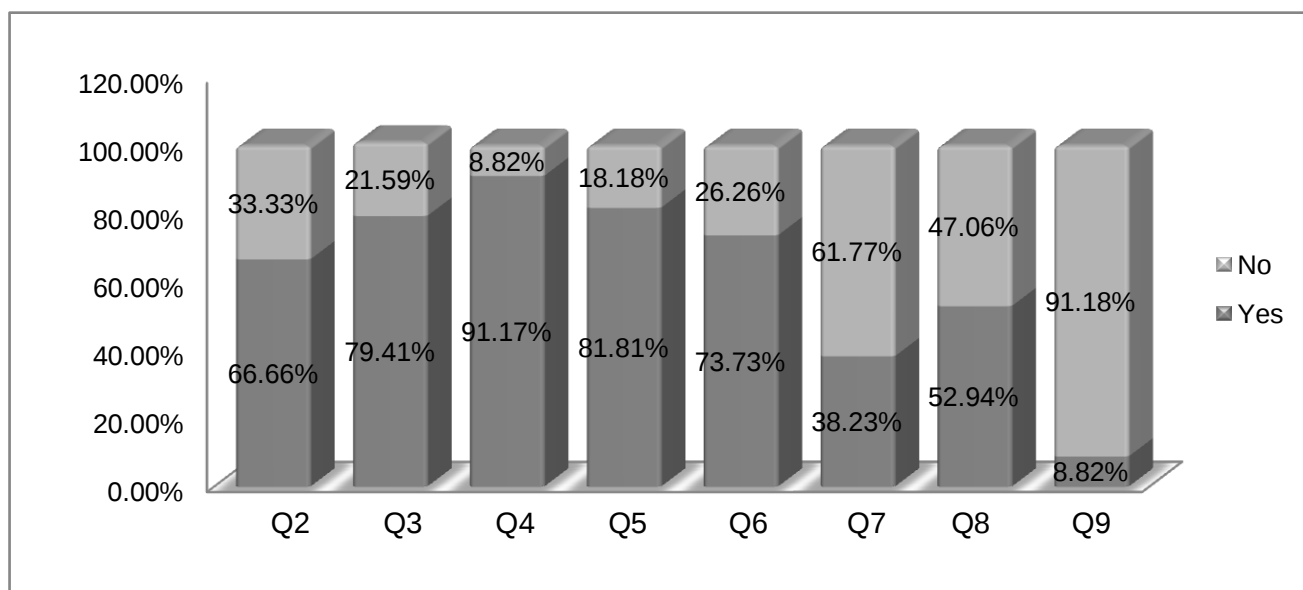


Figure 3: Herbal dosage forms mostly used

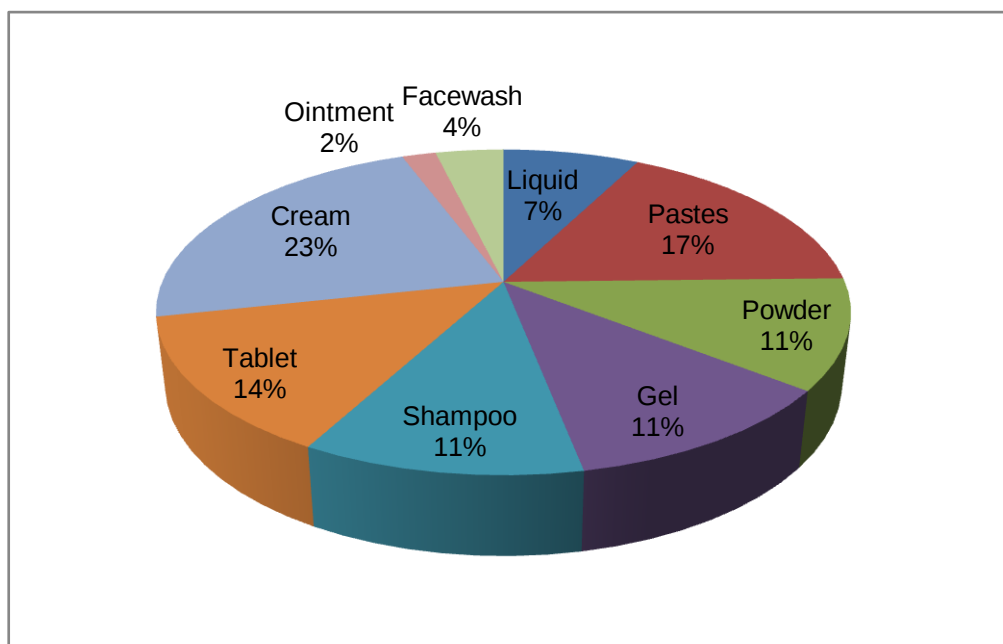
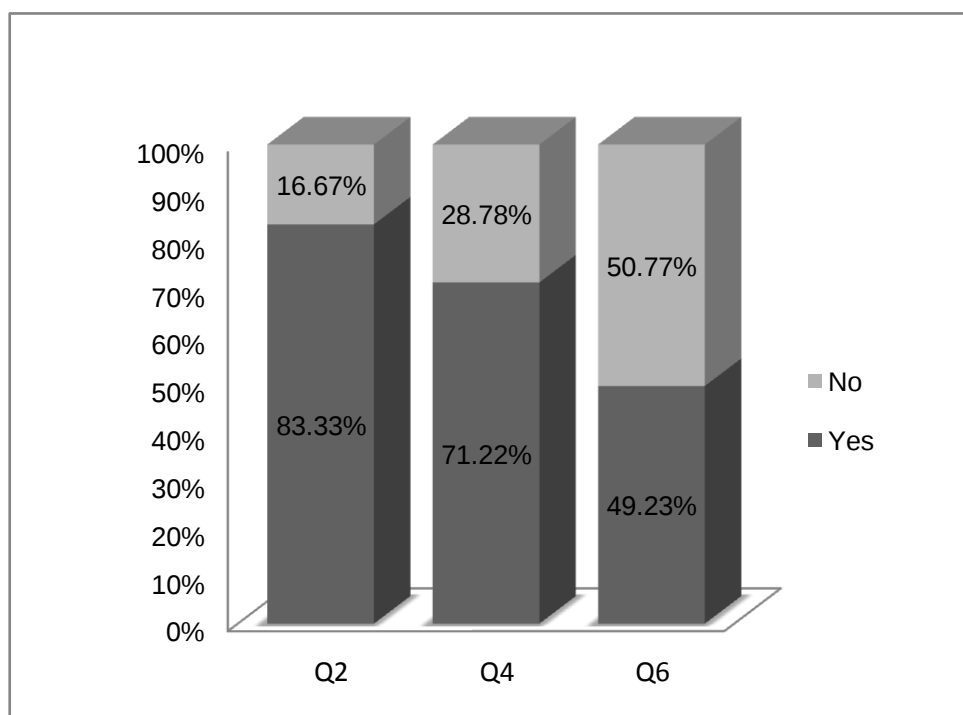


Figure 4: Residents not using ayurvedic drugs



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Present study indicates that very little population (36%) is aware about the herbal drugs against a huge population (64%). By using a particular set of questionnaire we tried to find out the reasons for not using the herbal drugs. According to this population (not using herbal drugs) herbal drugs are

1. **Costly:** 83% of population do not use herbal product because of their higher cost.
2. **Safety:** 29% of populations do not think herbal products are safe.
3. **Rules and regulation:** 50% of population thinks that herbal drugs are not prepared according to rules and regulations.

So the appropriate steps are required to be taken to spread the awareness about importance of the herbal drugs in the society. This can be made possible by various ways like involvement of ayurvedic practitioners, govt. awareness programmes, medical camps by pharmaceutical

companies, conduction of seminars in educational institutions to create awareness among the young generation. Such studies are also required to be carried out in each corner of country to find out the depth of awareness and measures to be taken.

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