Local Wisdom of Using Medicinal Plants in Umong and Si Bua Ban Communities

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Abstract

Local Thais throughout Thailand have effectively used medicinal plants for treatment of diseases or disorders for a long period of time. Many remedies have been formulated and the knowledge has been continuously transferred from generation to generation. Nowadays, some local wisdom concerning herbal or medicinal plants has been gradually faded away due to the emergence of modern drugs and/or treatment methods. Recently, one of the adverse effects of using modern antibiotics was the emergence of drug resistance of many pathogens; hence, local wisdom of using medicinal plants has gained vastly attention to replace some modern drugs or enhance good health and wellness of people. Medicinal plants and their local uses in Umong community have been investigated previously. A book regarding medicinal plants, natural products and compost making in the community has been written to use as a guideline for young generations to study their valuable local knowledge. Additionally, a constructive workshop about medicinal plants, from basic to applied perspectives, was performed on school juveniles. Subsequently, the survey team has observed the types and usage of plants in Si Bua Ban community by the methods of village scholar interviewing and plant observing. There were 96 plants so far which have been generally used. Among these, the use value of Aloe vera (L.) Burm.f. was the highest following by Andrographis paniculata Ness., Chromolaena odorata (L.) R.M.King & H.Rob. and Jatropha podagrica Hook. with the use values of 1.02, 1.01, 0.75 and 0.71, respectively. Furthermore, the other plants have been used as well but in the lesser extent. The highest Informant Agreement Ratio (0.91) was on the injury group which included wounds, burns and abscesses. The Si Bua Ban community was different from the Umong community in some aspects especially in the medicinal plant point of view. No recognized group commercially manufactures medicinal plant product but for household use only. Some agricultural products have been processed for value addition and product preservation, for example, dried banana. Interestingly, some villagers are career successful on the compost making and distribution reflecting how people have concerned about green environment and organic agriculture. Unfortunately, the tendency of local medicinal plant usage is seemingly decreased and could be vanished from the community. Therefore, the local wisdom of using medicinal plants for curing both infectious and non-infectious diseases should be carefully preserved to prevent the extinction of valuable plants and treatment methods as well as to protect people from harmful pathogens existing in the community. Information gathered has been analyzed and a book described the medicinal plants and local wisdom found in Si Bua Ban community has been documented. Ultimately, a network created for communities to connect and share information about local wisdom of using medicinal plants and treatment methods will be a useful tool for conserving the valuable knowledge and tradition of Thais.

Keywords
Diabetes mellitus, Natural products, Diversity, Organic fertilizer

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