

Maternal Health Care through Medicinal Plants

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ABSTRACT The health of the mother determines the health of the child. Indigenous methods and materials have been used since ages in maternal health care both before and after the delivery. Gorter *et al.* (1995) reported that mothers had more confidence in folk logic treatments that they themselves or the traditional healers applied, than the service offered at health centers. It was observed that in certain cases traditional treatments were used in combination with the western medicine. The present study is an attempt to determine the awareness of the rural women regarding the purposes of use of some selected plants and their products for maternal health care. The data collected from 300 rural mothers from three districts of Punjab (India) during the year 2002-2003 using a structured interview schedule revealed that majority of the respondents were aware of the purpose of use of Jaggery. All purposes of use of Turmeric and Chebulic myrobalan were known to more than seventy percent of the women. The use of Black pepper in inducing fertility and Indian lilac in controlling skin diseases was known to very few women. Purpose of use of Dry zinger and Acre nut was known to majority of the women. Lesser percentage of women being aware of some properties provides scope for creating awareness regarding their use. The findings points towards a need to focus on dissemination of knowledge on use of these plants/products through emphasis on purpose of their use to convince the users regarding their effectiveness.