

## **An Ethno Botanical Survey of Medicinal Plants Used in the Island of Gozo**

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**ABSTRACT** This study was conducted on the island of Gozo, a small rural island with a history of herbal medicinal use. Although today this practice has declined, there are still some senior citizens who recall the uses of these plants. Primary and secondary information was sought in order to determine the changes that occurred during the past years in the use of herbal remedies. The Fidelity Level (FL %) was calculated to distinguish the most commonly recorded diseases or conditions for a specific plant, as mentioned by informants. The plants mentioned by the primary and secondary sources were surveyed on site. Out of 35 informants, 63 percent originated from G'arb, a village renowned for a healer. In this region the informants aged between 65-92 years. The most frequently used medicinal plants come mainly from the Asteraceae family (10), followed by the Lamiaceae family (7) and Rosaceae and Poaceae families (5). The most treated conditions were skin disorders (20) and gastrointestinal (20) followed by respiratory problems (18). The plant with the highest Fidelity Level was *Matricaria chamomile* L. (92%), *Erica multiflora* L. and *Micromeria microphylla* (D'Urv) Benth (80%) and *Verbena officinalis* L. (77%). Most of the species were obtained from uncultivated and cultivated plants, as well as some are considered to be weeds and others bought from the pharmacy or the grocery. This was the first systematic ethnobotanical survey conducted for the Island of Gozo. The combination of primary and secondary information and the *in situ* observations provided a comprehensive picture.