A COMPLEMENTARY STUDY OF UBAR KAMPUNG FOR DIABETES MELLITUS IN THE TATAR SUNDA REGION OF WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus (DM) has become a global health problem, which has particularly been increasing over the past decades. Indonesia is one of ten countries with the largest number of people suffering from diabetes mellitus. Although several therapies are in use for treatment, there are certain limitations due to the high costs and side effects involved, such as the development of hypoglycemia, gain of weight, gastrointestinal disturbances, liver toxicity, etc. Since many conventional medicines have been derived from prototypic molecules in medicinal plants, there is a renewed interest in the study of biochemical analysis of components in Medicinal, Aromatic and Cosmetic (MAC) plants, based on the ethno-directed approach of focusing on the indigenous peoples’ plant knowledge systems. The Sundanese people are located in the same island of Java as the Javanese, but they identify themselves as part of a distinct cultural area called Pasundan or Tatar Sunda. Living in their traditional agricultural communities for many generations, they largely rely on the local MAC plants for their health, healing, and well-being and as such, people of Sundanese have accumulated a rich body of indigenous plant knowledge and practice, known as ubar kampung. The proposed study and analysis of past and present indigenous plant knowledge and use of the Sundanese people seeks not only to contribute to the understanding and explanation of local peoples’ health and illness behaviour of the plural medical system in the area, with a focus on the use of the traditional medical system for the treatment of diabetes mellitus, but also to the possible discovery of new bio-chemical components of indigenous MAC plants for the development of new medicines for the treatment of diabetes mellitus in Indonesia.

Keywords: MAC plants, diabetes mellitus, ubar kampung, Sundanese