

BJMS

Borneo Journal of Medical Sciences

ABSTRACTS FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Traditional Medicine in Sabah: A Case Study from the District of Kota Marudu

David Matanjun¹, Mohammad Saffree Bin Jeffree¹, Julius Kulip^{2,3}, Md Shamsur Rahman¹, Sadia Choudhury Shimmi¹

¹ Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu,
Sabah, Malaysia

² Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu,
Sabah, Malaysia

³ Borneo Heritage Research Unit,
Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Heritage,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu,
Sabah, Malaysia (Research Fellow)

Keywords: traditional medicine, Sabah, disease, health, practitioners, herbal, ethnomedicine

Background: As in other parts of the world, the practice of traditional healing has been part of the local healthcare system for most of the indigenous ethnic groups, since time immemorial. Using descriptive research format, this study looked into the practice of a traditional medicine practitioner in one of the villages of Kota Marudu in Sabah, Malaysia. The practitioner comes from the Dusun Tagahas subethnic group which is one of the numerous ethnic groups in Sabah. The large number of ethnic group in Sabah has made the research of ethnomedicine rather challenging. The practitioner acquired knowledge of traditional healing and treatment which is mainly herbal medicines alluded with some spiritual aspects. He used many herbal preparations in various forms and applications. Similar to the other traditional medicine practitioners, his knowledge and skill regarding his practice are impressive but the practitioner is unable to explain on the mechanism of how the therapy works. Generally their philosophy rests on the notion that disease responds to right medicine but not explanation. There is an urgent need to capture all the knowledge and skill possessed by traditional medicine practitioners, who generally belong to an ageing and fading population, especially those live in remote and hard to reach areas. Scientific research should be conducted to help traditional medicine healers and herbalists to understand their practices before they suffer the consequences of inexorable extinction.

