Basic oils used in traditional drug preparations of ancient Sabaragamuwa

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Abstract

Sabaragamuwa is a province of Sri Lanka with great historical background of traditional medicine. Ancient medical practitioners of Sabaragamuwa had written their pharmaceutical formula (Sabaragamuwe wedakama) as texts in Kingdom of Kandy era; for continuity of their traditional knowledge for the future generation. There are many categories of formula; including guli (pills), kalka (pastes), herbal vines, powders, decoctions, oils & ointments according to those texts. This study was conduct as a literature survey to identify the uses of basic oils in Sabaragamuwa traditional pharmaceutical formula; at Pandit G. P. Wickramarachchi Memorial library in Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute, Yakkala by referencing traditional texts on pharmacy were used in Sabaragamuwa province in ancient era. Time duration of this study was 6 months. Selected drug categories were herbal pills, pastes and oil mixtures. Out of 349 formulas uses of Sesame oil (27.22%) was maximum. Uses of ghee were 25.25%. Other than those Mee seeds’ oil (10.2 %), Margosa seeds’ oil (5.75%), Coconut oil (3.72%), King coconut oil (0.85%), Butter oil (1.85% ) and Mustard oil ( 0.28%) were used for the traditional drug preparations of Sabaragamuwa province according to the results. Ghee, Sesame oil, Caster oil and Margosa oil were used as key ingredients in traditional oil mixtures of Sabaragamuwe wedakama. These oils were used; to triturate ingredients in pills and pastes; as a pratiwapa (additional supplements) or anupana (vehicles) in decoctions and powders. In addition of those usages above oils were used as base or lubricants of various traditional ointments in Sabaragamuwe wedakama.

Keywords: Sabaragamuwe wedakama, traditional oil mixtures, guli, kalka, anupana

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