

## Ethnopharmacological profile of traditional plants used in Morocco by cancer patients as herbal therapeutics

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### Abstract

Cancer is one of the major causes of mortality throughout the world. In Morocco, cancer patients are increasing, which indicate that by the year 2020 it is predicted that cancer will be causing seven out of 10 deaths. To reduce this high mortality rate, medical research now turns to the discovery of new molecules that will help to develop natural anticancer drugs. The current study was designed as a prospective randomized investigation on different plants used by the patients of a center for cancer treatment in Morocco. This study was based on a sample of 691 patients from the Cancer Institution in Rabat in a period from September 2009 to march 2010. Among the investigated cases, 272 patients (39%) were identified to regularly use medical plants, and 113 patients among them use plants along with medical treatment. While 159 patients used traditional medicine before using conventional modern drugs. Fifty-five plants have been cited during this study, of which *Aristolochia longa*, *Trigonella foenum-graecum*, *Cassia absus* and *Nigella sativa* are the mostly used medicinal plants. Quantitative studies show that the age interval mostly affected by cancer is 40 to 60 years and women are the more prone to cancer. This data shows that phytotherapy has always been practiced in Morocco. Almost all the patients asked have pointed out that the reason for using phytotherapy is poverty.

**Keywords:** Cancer, Ethnopharmacology; Morocco

### Introduction

World Health Organization statistics have estimated that cancer will cause 83.2 million deaths between 2005 and 2015 if the recommended measures are not respected. In 2007, Cancer was the cause of 7.9 million deaths, which is 13% of world mortality (The World Health Statistics, 2008). Currently, Morocco has five public centers and four private clinics for cancer treatment. 7.2 % of cancer patient death every year, with 30000 new cases