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ETHNOBOTANY OF MEDICINAL PLANTS FOR POSTPARTUM CARE USED BY THE PEOPLE OF UMAUTA VILLAGE, BOLA DISTRICT, SIKKA REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

The use of traditional medicinal plants for postpartum care remains an important aspect of local knowledge among the people of Umauta Village, although it has not been comprehensively documented through scientific research. This study aimed to identify the medicinal plant species, the plant parts utilized, and the preparation and application methods employed in postpartum care. A descriptive qualitative method with a Participatory Ethnobotanical Appraisal (PEA) approach was applied. Data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews, plant inventory and identification, and documentation involving 20 informants, including postpartum mothers, traditional birth attendants, family members, and healthcare workers. The findings revealed that the community uses ten species of medicinal plants from several plant families. Leaves were the most frequently utilized plant part (90%), followed by root bark (10%). The preparation methods included boiling, pounding, grating, and direct use, while the remedies were administered orally, applied topically, attached to the body, or used as herbal bathing mixtures. These medicinal plants are traditionally used to accelerate physical recovery, relieve pain, and improve blood circulation in postpartum mothers. The study highlights the significance of the ethnobotanical knowledge of the Umauta community in preserving local wisdom and its potential contribution to the development of evidence-based traditional healthcare practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the megadiverse countries with a very high richness of medicinal plants. It is estimated that around 80% of the world's medicinal plant species are found in Indonesia, but their use is still relatively low compared to the potential that exists (Putri, 2025). Medicinal plants have long been used by communities as part of traditional medicine, including for postpartum care. This practice is a cultural heritage passed down through generations and is still maintained by various communities in Indonesia. Using medicinal plants during the postpartum period is believed to help speed up physical recovery, reduce pain, improve reproductive organs, boost appetite, and support breastfeeding (Rahmawati et al., 2024). In addition to being backed by people's empirical experience, traditional medicine has also gained recognition through Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health which states that traditional health services are part of the health service system carried out safely, responsibly, and taking into account the social and cultural values of the community. This condition shows that the use of traditional medicinal plants has important value, both from a health aspect and in preserving culture.

The people of Umauta Village, Bola District, Sikka Regency, still make use of various medicinal plants as part of postpartum care. Knowledge about selecting plant types, which parts to use, processing techniques, and how to use them is passed down orally through families or midwives, who are the main practitioners of traditional medicine. However, modernization, changes in lifestyle, and the growing availability of modern healthcare services could potentially reduce this local knowledge if it is not documented scientifically. On the other hand, information about postpartum medicinal plants in Umauta Village is still very limited, so there is not yet any scientific data that can be used as an information source, material for conserving local knowledge, or a basis for further research development. Therefore, ethnobotanical documentation becomes important for inventorying the richness of community knowledge while also supporting the preservation of biodiversity and local culture.

Based on these conditions, this study is aimed at answering the research questions, which are: (1) what types and parts of traditional medicinal plants are used by the people of Umauta Village for postpartum care? and (2) how are these traditional medicinal plants processed and utilized in postpartum care? These questions were formulated to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community's use of medicinal plants. In line with these questions, this study aims to identify the types and parts of medicinal plants used as well as describe the processing techniques and methods of use in postpartum care. The results of this study are expected to serve as a scientific source of information regarding the use of traditional medicinal plants that continue to be practiced in Umauta Village.

Various previous studies have examined the use of medicinal plants in postpartum care in different regions, including among the Madura ethnic group (Muslichah et al., 2021), the South Aceh community (Husna, 2023), Central South Timor Regency (Meti, 2022), and East Flores (Dilak et al., 2023). These studies show that medicinal plants are still used as part of postpartum care and have benefits in aiding the health recovery process. However, most previous research only focused on identifying plant types or their benefits, and some only examined specific plant groups, such as the Zingiberaceae family (Fardana & Yuniarti, 2024). Additionally, previous studies have rarely integrated the identification of plant types, the parts used, processing techniques, and methods of use into a single comprehensive study, especially among the community in Umauta Village.

Based on these gaps, this research provides a scientific contribution through an ethnobotanical study that comprehensively documents the knowledge of the people of Umauta Village regarding the use of medicinal plants for postpartum care using the Participatory Ethnobotanical Appraisal (PEA) approach. This approach allows for active community involvement in the process of identifying, processing, and utilizing medicinal plants so as to produce more in-depth information about traditional medicine practices that are still maintained. The results of this research are expected to enrich the treasures of ethnobotanical science, support the preservation of local knowledge and biodiversity, and become a reference for further research on the pharmacological potential of medicinal plants and the development of evidence-based traditional health services.

METHOD

This study is an exploratory research with a qualitative descriptive approach using the Participatory Ethnobotanical Appraisal (PEA) method. The PEA method is used to document community knowledge about the use of medicinal plants through direct involvement of informants in the data collection process. The research was conducted in Umauta Village, Bola District, Sikka Regency in February 2026. The determination of informants used a purposive sampling technique, which means selecting informants who have knowledge and experience in using medicinal plants for postnatal care. There were 20 informants, consisting of six postpartum mothers, six traditional birth attendants, six family members, and two healthcare workers.

The research data includes primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through field observations, semi-structured interviews, plant inventories, and documentation. The information collected includes plant types, the parts that are used, benefits, processing techniques, and how they are used. Species identification was based on plant identification literature and verified using the PlantNet, iNaturalist, Google Lens, and GBIF apps. Interviews were conducted after obtaining consent from each informant while keeping their identities confidential.

The data were analyzed descriptively in a qualitative way through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Quantitative analysis was done using the Use Value (UV) index to find out the level of use of each type of medicinal plant based on how often it was mentioned by informants, and the organ usage percentage formula was used to determine which parts of the plants were most commonly used in postnatal care with the formula:

Use value (UV) formula : $\mathrm{UV} = \frac{U}{N}$

Organ presentation formula

$$\text{Percentage} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of organ uses}}{\text{Total usage amount}}\right) \times 100\%$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Traditional Medicinal Plants Used in Postpartum Care

Based on research on medicinal plants for postpartum care in Umauta Village, Bola District, Sikka Regency, there are 10 types of plants used by the community for postpartum care.

Table 1. Types of traditional medicinal plants for postpartum care

No	Nama Jenis tumbuhan			Famili
	Lokal	**Indonesia**	**Ilmiah**	
1.	Liti	Mentaos	*Wrightia pubescens* R. Br.	*Apocynaceae*
2.	Wure Roun	Marah/ Mahang	*Macaranga tanarius* (L.) Müll. Arg.	*Euphorbiaceae*
3.	Mu'u daha roun	Sembung	*Blumea balsamifera* (L) DC.	*Asteraceae*
4.	Kepi	Petai Laut	*Parkia speciosa* Hassk.	*Fabaceae*
5.	Ai Laga	Legundi	*Vitex trifolia* L.	*Lamiaceae*
6.	Damar Nilon	Jarak Kepyar merah	*Jatropha gossypiifolia* L.	*Euphorbiaceae*
7.	Poho	Sekentut	*Paederia foetida* L.	*Rubiaceae*
8.	Manu Mein	Daun Ungu	*Graptophyllum pictum* (L.) Griff.	*Acanthaceae*
9.	Puhe Beta	Pegagan	*Centella asiatica* (L.) Urb.	*Apiaceae*
10.	Bunga Jawa	Pohon Gabus India/Melaati Pohon	*Millingtonia hortensis* L. fil.	*Bignoniaceae*

Research results show that the people of Umauta Village still use 10 types of medicinal plants in postnatal care, namely Wrightia pubescens, Macaranga tanarius, Blumea balsamifera, Parkia speciosa, Vitex trifolia, Jatropha gossypiifolia, Paederia foetida, Graptophyllum pictum, Centella asiatica, and Millingtonia hortensis. The use of these plants is local knowledge passed down through generations within families and from traditional birth attendants. Each plant has different functions, such as reducing pain, speeding up recovery, addressing inflammation, improving blood circulation, and helping postnatal wound healing. These findings align with the studies of Muslichah et al. (2021), Husna (2023), Meti (2022), and Dilak et al. (2023), which state that medicinal plants are still an important part of postnatal care in various regions of Indonesia.

2. Parts of Plants Used in Postpartum Care

The results of interviews with respondents who use plants as medicine for postpartum care show that the parts of the plants used to make the remedies are the leaves and root bark, as can be seen in Figure 1.



Picture 1. Percentage Diagram of Plant Organs Used

The part of the plant that is used the most is the leaves (90%), while the root bark is only 10%. Leaves are chosen because they are easy to get, easy to process, available all year round, and don't harm the plant's growth. Plus, leaves are known to contain various bioactive compounds like flavonoids, alkaloids, tannins, saponins, and essential oils that can help the healing process. This finding matches the research by Muslichah et al. (2021), Husna (2023), and Meti (2022), which reported that leaves are the most commonly used plant part in traditional postpartum remedies.

3. Processing Techniques and Ways to Use Traditional Medicinal Plants

The way of processing and using traditional medicinal plants for postpartum care by the people of Umauta village is very traditional, without using any modern tools, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. How to Process and Use Traditional Medicinal Plants for Postpartum Care

No	Nama penyakit/Keluhan	Jenis ramuan	Nama Tumbuhan	Pengolahan	Pemanfaatan
1.	▪ Badan Sakit ▪ Badan Berat untuk bangun, berdiri, jalan, susah untuk beraktivitas ▪ Lemas ▪ Pusing ▪ Tambah darah ▪ Nyeri di perut dan seluruh tubuh	Campuran	▪ Liti ▪ Wure Roun ▪ Mu'u Daha Roun ▪ Manu Mein ▪ Poho ▪ Damar Nilon ▪ Ai Laga	Proses pengolahan tumbuhan obat berbahan daun dilakukan dengan cara Direbus/Dimasak**,** direbus secara bersamaan/dicampurkan semuanya dan juga bisa direbus secara terpisah tergantung ketersediaan tumbuhan obat	Air dan daun rebusan Manu Mein kemudian dimanfaatkan dengan beberapa cara, yaitu untuk mandi herbal, terapi uap, dan kompres.

				perawatan pasca melahirkan yang ada di hutan, kebun dan pekarangan rumah.	
2.	▪ Luka dalam ▪ Nyeri di perut dan seluruh tubuh	Tunggal	Puhe Beta	Pengolahan tumbuhan obat Puhe dilakukan melalui dua metode utama, yaitu metode dimasak bersama bubur dan metode diperas untuk diambil airnya.	Metode pertama adalah dimasak bersama bubur. Bubur dipilih karena mudah dicerna dan dipercaya dapat membantu memulihkan tenaga ibu setelah melahirkan dan dikonsumsi tiga kali dalam sehari selama satu minggu. Metode kedua adalah diperas untuk diambil airnya. Air hasil perasan inilah yang kemudian digunakan sebagai obat minum bagi ibu pasca melahirkan. Ramuan biasanya diminum langsung satu kali dalam sehari pada saat ibu bangun pagi dan dalam keadaan perut masi kosong karena dipercaya membantu penyerapan.
3.	Keluarkan darah kotor, darah beku yang ada dalam perut atau janin ibu setelah melahirkan	Campuran	▪ Bunga Jawa ▪ Santan Kelapa Tua	Pengolahan dengan cara dimasak secara bersamaan dengan santan kelapa tua hingga memperoleh minyak dari hasil maskan dengan ampas dari hasil masakan berupa lengi tain (ampas).	Cara penggunaannya yaitu diminum minyaknya stengah gelas air minum dan ampasnya(lengi tain) dimkan saat masih hangat sesuai anjuran dukun bayi.

The people of Umauta Village process medicinal plants by boiling, pounding, grating, and using them directly. Boiling is the most commonly used technique because it is believed to release the active compounds from the plants. The concoctions are then used by drinking, applying to the skin, placing on certain body parts, or mixing with bath water. Some remedies are also made from combinations of several types of plants, which are believed to provide better benefits. This research is consistent with Dilak et al. (2023), who stated that boiling is the most dominant processing technique, while using remedies orally or topically is a common way to care for postpartum mothers. These findings show that the people of Umauta Village still maintain ethnobotanical knowledge as part of local wisdom, which has the potential to support the development of evidence-based traditional health care.

4. Use Value (UV) Score

Based on the level of use of various types of traditional medicinal plants for postpartum care, the usefulness value (UV) was obtained as follows:

Table 3. Use Value (UV) Scores Based on the Utilization Level of Traditional

No	Nama Tumbuhan	*Use Value* (UV)	Keterangan
1.	Ai Laga (Legundi)	0,30	Memiliki nilai UV rendah, karena cukup dikenal namun penggunaannya tidak sebanyak mentaos atau sembung
2.	Poho (Sekentut)		
3.	Liti (Mentaos)	0,40	Nilai UV yang rendah menunjukkan bahwa tumbuhan ini jarang digunakan dan hanya disebutkan oleh sedikit informan, yang kemungkinan disebabkan oleh menurunnya ketersediaan di lingkungan sekitar
4.	Kepi (Petai Laut)		
5.	Bunga Jawa (Pohon Gabus India/Melati Pohon)		
6.	Puhe Beta (Pegagan)	0,75	Memiliki nilai UV sedang hingga tinggi, karena selain digunakan secara luar, juga dikonsumsi langsung. Khasiatnya dalam memperbaiki sirkulasi darah membuatnya cukup penting.
7.	Manu Mein (Daun Ungu)	0,80	Memiliki nilai UV tinggi, karena cukup dikenal dalam membantu penyembuhan luka dan melancarkan peredaran darah, tetapi tidak digunakan oleh semua informan.
8.	Damar Nilon (Jarak Kepyar merah)	0,85	Memiliki nilai UV sedang, karena digunakan untuk mengobati luka dan peradangan, tetapi tidak selalu menjadi pilihan utama dalam ramuan
9.	Wure roun (Marah/Mahang)	0,90	Memiliki nilai UV tinggi, karena fungsi dan cara penggunaannya hampir sama dengan mentaos serta banyak dikenal oleh masyarakat karena memiliki manfaat yang beragam seperti mengurangi nyeri, peradangan, dan kelelahan.
10.	Mu'u daha roun (Sembung)		

5. Medicinal Plants for Postpartum Care

The results of the Use Value (UV) analysis show the importance level of each medicinal plant based on how frequently it was mentioned by informants. The higher the UV value, the greater the level of use and community knowledge about the plant. Plants with the highest UV values are the ones most commonly used in postpartum care because they are considered effective, easy to obtain, and have been used traditionally. On the other hand, plants with lower UV values indicate that their use is still limited to specific needs or conditions.

The high UV values of certain plants indicate that the people of Umauta Village have strong local knowledge about the benefits of these plants. Besides being influenced by the perceived effectiveness among the community, UV values are also related to the availability of the plants in the surrounding environment as well as the ease of processing and using them. These results align with the concept of Ethnobotany suggests that Use Value reflects how important a species is in people's lives based on how intensively it's used. So, analyzing UV values gives information about which medicinal plants have the most potential for further research, especially regarding their phytochemical content, pharmacological activity, and the development of traditional medicine based on local wisdom.

CONCLUSION

The community of Umauta Village, Bola District, Sikka Regency, uses 10 types of traditional medicinal plants that belong to 9 families, namely Apocynaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Asteraceae, Fabaceae, Lamiaceae, Rubiaceae, Acanthaceae, Apiaceae, and Bignoniaceae, for postpartum care. The plant part most commonly used is the leaf, while other parts include roots, root bark, and fruit.

The way the community processes medicinal plants is still done traditionally, such as boiling, pounding, squeezing, and using them directly. The method most frequently used is boiling. The herbal preparations are used by drinking, eating, applying, placing on the body, compressing, steaming, and using as a bath mixture to help speed up the recovery of postpartum mothers, reduce pain and inflammation, improve blood circulation, and restore body stamina.

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