

Is Ethnomedicinal Plant Knowledge Gendered?

A case study from the Bolivian Amazon

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Research question: In the same ethnic group, does the ethnomedicinal plant knowledge held by women differ from the ethnomedicinal plant knowledge held by men?

1 Research approach

Perspectives on gendered knowledge of medicinal plants

- Gendered knowledge of medicinal plant (Voeks 2007).
- Not gendered knowledge and great deal of shared knowledge among women and men (Browner & Perdue 1988).

Objective of this study: To assess gendered differences in ethnomedicinal plant knowledge among the Tsimane'.

2 Case study: The Tsimane'

- Forager horticulturalist society inhabiting lowland Bolivian Amazonia
- Population ~12.000 people
- Rely primarily on their local ethnomedicinal remedies to cure health complaints, in combination with pharmaceutical treatments at a practical level (Calvet-Mir et al. 2008)



3 Methodology

18 months of fieldwork. Participant observation major source of information.

Qualitative data collection to contextualize the research



Quantitative data collection



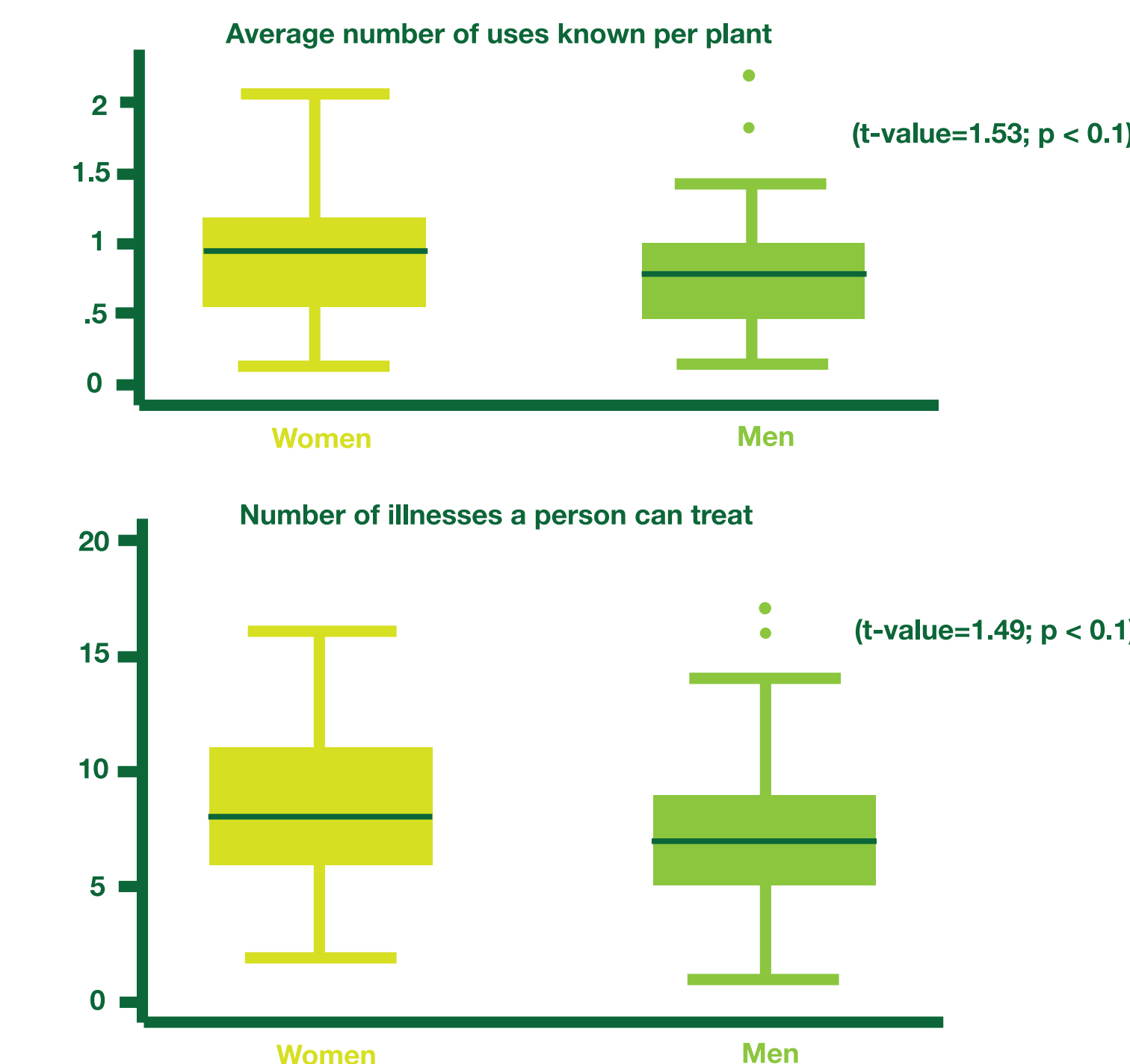
4 Results

Table 1. Results of knowledge survey by plants for women and men

Scientific name	Tsimane' name	Number of men that give a medicinal use	Number of illnesses or affections that can be treated	Most common illnesses or affection that can be treated with the plant	Specific illnesses or affection that can be treated with the plant cited by men	Scientific name	Tsimane' name	Number of women that give a medicinal use	Number of illnesses or affections that can be treated	Most common illnesses or affection that can be treated with the plant	Specific illnesses or affection that can be treated with the plant cited by women
<i>Aspidosperma aff. rigidum</i> Rusby	Vambason	44	16	Diarrhea	Vesicle	<i>Aspidosperma aff. rigidum</i> Rusby	Vambason	44	15	Stomach pain Diarrhea	Menstruation
<i>Amburana caerensis</i>	Macha	25	12	Back pain Muscle ache	Scabies	<i>Amburana caerensis</i>	Macha	25	13	Back pain Flu	Post labor
<i>Entada sp.</i>	Buisi	40	14	Contraception Stomach pain		<i>Entada sp.</i>	Buisi	57	15	Stomach ache Menstruation	Muscle ache Contraception
<i>Persea americana</i> C. Miller	Parta	10	7	Diarrhea Stomach pain	Flu	<i>Persea americana</i> C. Miller	Parta	6	5	Diarrhea Back pain	
	Cravu	26	10	Flu Tooth ache			Cravu	24	11	Flu Diarrhea	Labor
	Jamo'tarara	17	5	Leishmaniasis Fungus			Jamo'tarara	22	8	Leishmaniasis Fungus	Fertility Muscle ache
<i>Margaritaria nobilis</i> L.F.	Punuvacydes	19	10	Infected sore (boil) Muscle ache		<i>Margaritaria nobilis</i> L.F.	Punuvacydes	24	11	Infected sore (boil) Muscle ache	Muscle ache
<i>Davilla nitida</i> (Vahl) Kubitzki	Que'tsejtse	15	8	Muscle ache		<i>Davilla nitida</i> (Vahl) Kubitzki	Que'tsejtse	18	5	Muscle ache	
<i>Piper peltatum</i> Ruiz&Pav	Tyi'mujmure	30	13	Infected sore (boil) Fever		<i>Piper peltatum</i>	Tyi'mujmure	37	12	Infected sore (boil) Fever	Fever Diarrhea
	Yavitus	12	10	Muscle ache Infected sore (boil)			Yavitus	20	13	Muscle ache Dizziness	Menstruation
<i>Urera laciniata</i> (Goudot) Wedd urticaria.	Arara'	52	9	Fungus Muscle ache		<i>Urera laciniata</i> (Goudot) Wedd urticaria.	Arara'	51	8	Fungus Muscle ache	
	Banana	15	7	Bullet ant sting Muscle ache			Banana	23	8	Bullet ant sting Muscle ache	Stomach pain
	Ñetas	20	14	Stomach pain	Menstruation		Ñetas	30	12	Muscle ache	Chickenpox to gain weight
	Marva	41	14	Wasp sting Cuts			Marva	58	19	Wasp sting labor	Menstruation Scabies Pre-labor
<i>Acmella oleracea</i>	Mature	48	19	Fungus Tooth ache		<i>Acmella oleracea</i>	Mature	55	17	Fungus Labor	Babies weeping
<i>Ampelocera edentula</i> Kuhl.	Tson'sonty	33	9	Leishmaniasis Fungus		<i>Ampelocera edentula</i> Kuhl.	Tson'sonty	26	12	Leishmaniasis Fungus	

Table 2. Results of knowledge survey by illnesses or affections for women and men. Selected illnesses mentioned by more than 10 informants.

English name	Tsimane' name	Number of men curers	Number of plants that cure	Most common ethnospecies of medicinal plants used to treat	Specific ethnospecies of medicinal plants by cited by men used to cure	English name	Tsimane' name	Number of women curers	Number of plants that cure	Most common ethnospecies of medicinal plants used to treat	Specific ethnospecies of medicinal plants by cited by women used to cure
Flu	Aja'	23	7	Cravu / Mature	Parta	Flu	Aja'	25	10	Cravu / Macha	
Back pain	Areredye murujručansi	28	8	Vambason / Macha		Back pain	Areredye murujručansi	19	7	Vambason / Macha	
Fungus	Itsajtsaj	47	9	Arara' / Mature		Fungus	Itsajtsaj	52	7	Mature / Arara'	
Leishmaniasis	Jayedye'	31	4	Tson'sonty / Jamo'tarara		Fever	Jänjänyde	17	6	Tyijumjure	Tyijumjure
Headache	Jojno areredye	10	10	Banana / Punuvacydes / Mature		Leishmaniasis	Jayedye'	21	2	Tson'sonty / Jamo'tarara	
Infected sore (boil)	Ñäpdye	17	6	Tyijumjure / Punuvacydes		Headache	Jojno areredye	15	10	Arara' / Punuvacydes	
Muscle ache	Shushčansi areredye	10	13	Que'tsejtse / Arara'		Infected sore (boil)	Ñäpdye	25	8	Tyijumjure / Punuvacydes	
Stomach pain	Tämtäm vocočan	22	11	Buisi / Ñetas		Muscle ache	Shushčansi areredye	26	3	Arara' / Tyijumjure	Jamo'tarara / Banana
Muscle ache	Tämtämdye' shushčansi	37	13	Arara' / Que'tsejtse		Stomach pain	Tämtäm vocočan	36	11	Buisi / Vambason	Banana
Skin	Vara'jodye	32	8	Vambason / Macha		Muscle ache	Tämtämdye' shushčansi	34	14	Arara' / Ñetas	Jamo'tarara
Toothache		14	5	Mature / Cravu		Skin	Vara'jodye	37	8	Vambason / Buisi	Tyijumjure
Contraception		16	5	Buisi / Ñetas		Labor		23	8	Marva / Mature	Cravu / Buisi
Menstruation	Japacojba	10	4	Buisi / Ñetas		Post labor		16	4	Buisi / Marva	Macha
Wasp sting	Sindyes	25	2	Marva		Contraception		20	5	Buisi / Yavitus	
						Menstruation	Japacojba	22	7	Buisi / Vambason	Yavitus / Marva
						Wasp sting	Sindyes	34	1	Marva	
						Bullet ant sting	Ayusha'dyees	13	7	Buisi / Vambason	



5 Discussion & Implications

Among the Tsimane', ethnomedicinal knowledge is gendered.

- Women know more medicinal uses of the plants than men.
- Women's larger knowledge is associated to their specialized reproductive and paediatric knowledge.

Neglecting the gendered nature of ethnomedicinal knowledge might perpetuate the gender imbalance present in extant ethnobiological research. Initiatives not taking into account the gendered knowledge will be bias. This work helps to recognize women's knowledge promoting equity and social justice from a biocultural perspective.

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7 References

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