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A survey on cosmetic applications of herbal oils in the Northern part of Sri Lanka

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Herbal oils have been used for therapeutic and beauty applications in Sri Lanka, with a documented history of over 2,500 years. It is inherited knowledge which has been handed down from generation to generation and provides a largely unexplored source for the potential development of cosmetic formulations. Herbal oils are used in the management of skin care, hair care, hand and foot care, and dental care. The northern part of Sri Lanka has a rich plant diversity, and the local people of the region have a good knowledge of the use of plants for cosmetic purposes. Therefore, this present survey was conducted to identify the various beautifying applications of cosmetic potential herbal oils in the Northern part of Sri Lanka. Personal interviews were conducted via a semi-structured questionnaire with randomly selected 385 participants. Data were collected on the cosmetic application of herbal oil for skincare, hair care, foot care, eye care, nail care, lip care, and oral care topically. The acquired data were verified using the authentic Siddha literature and further reviewed for various chemical compositions and relevant pharmacological activities. Eight herbal oils were identified for different cosmetic applications for skincare (46%), hair care (32%), foot care (6%), eye care (6%), nail care (4%), lip care (4%) and oral care (2%) topically. The identified herbal oils possess anti-tyrosinase, antioxidant, anti-tumor, anti-microbial, and anti-inflammatory activities. In conclusion, acquired information could ultimately be utilized for the development of herbal cosmetic formulations through the isolation and characterization of bioactive compounds from the herbal oils while preserving the traditional knowledge in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cosmetics, Herbal oil, Natural, North, Sri Lanka