

## **Abstract**

**Background:** Using herbal plants by pregnant and lactating mothers without awareness of their harmful effects expose both mother and fetus or infant to a great danger as abortion, premature term, uterus bleeding, physical and mental retardation of the fetus. Thus the aim of this study was to investigate from understanding the extent to which herbal plants treatment are used, the reason for which they are used, and to ensure that these reasons are correct.

**Methods:** An ethnopharmacological survey (A cross-sectional observational design study) using a pre-piloted questionnaire was undertaken on herbal plants used by pregnant and lactating women in West-Bank/Palestine. A questionnaire was distributed to 350 pregnant or lactating women collected the questionnaires from the study participants face to face in Arabic the local language of the informants. The informed consent forms, ethics and aims of the present study were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at An-Najah National University. To identify the most important species used UV and use SPSS to analysis the data.

**Results:** Collected data have shown that 13 medicinal plants are utilized while 12 plants are not used during pregnancy. Moreover 15 plants are utilized and 9 plants are not used during lactation for treating and dealing with various problems. Belonging to 14 families; among them Lamiaceae, Apiaceae, leguminosae and Rubiaceae the most common.

The most plants used in pregnancy were found to be, Sag, Anise and peppermint. Whereas castor oil, Ginger, saffron and sienna were mostly not used by pregnant women Moreover cinnamon, anise, peppermint and sage were mostly used during lactation. Whereas, castor oil, ginger, garlic and aloe Vera were mostly not utilized during lactation.

**Conclusions:** This study showed that some of the uses of medicinal plants during pregnancy and lactation were wrong and some of them were correct. We searched and checked its correct uses. This study is of great importance in order to decrease the possibility of endangering the fetus's and infants life. A combined effort between researchers, scientists, lactating and pregnant my help in changing wrong uses and thoughts about medicinal plants and help improving the overall health of both mother and fetus.

**Keywords:** Medicinal plants; Pregnancy; lactation.