

**Cross-cultural ethnomedicine between the Malinke of Mali and Ash ninka of Peru.** (Oral Presentation)

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**Introduction**

The Yuru Ash ninka of the Peruvian Amazon rainforest inhabit a very different landscape than the Malinke of Kita in the savannahs of Western Mali, yet they face many similar diseases that they both treat with their respective floras, using quite similar genera.

**Objectives**

To find the taxonomic similarities in the medicinal plants of the Ash ninka and Malinke used for malaria, leishmaniasis, chagas, African sleeping sickness, asthma, diabetes, eczema, and uterine fibroids using quantitative methods with the least amount of field and lab time necessary.

**Methods**

Eight Ash ninka and fifteen Malinke healers were given structured interviews both describing symptoms and naming diseases to determine the medicinal plants they used, then these plants were collected as vouchers and in bulk for analysis in laboratory bioassays against the diseases. Species-informant curve calculations were used in the field to determine when species saturation was approaching.

**Results**

Of the 90 collections (60 species, 75 genera, 39 families) of Ash ninka plants and 80 collections (76 species, 68 genera, 41 families) of Malinke plants collected, there was a surprising overlap with 51% of families, 15% of the genera, and 3% of the species of Malinke medicinal plants also used as medicinal plants by the Ash ninka. On-the-fly species-informant curves showed that species saturation was approaching with the Malinke, but not with the Ash ninka, despite that every healer and head-of-household had been interviewed.

**Conclusion**

The overlap of medicinal plant taxa between the completely different habitats of the Peruvian rainforest and the Malian savannah is surprisingly large and shows the power of using quantitative taxonomic techniques to find common cross-cultural medicinal plants. Using species-informant curves calculated in the field saved unproductive time in the field.

**Keywords:** Quantitative ethnobotany, malaria, leishmaniasis, chagas, African sleeping sickness, asthma, diabetes, eczema, uterine fibroids, parasitic diseases, auto-immune diseases, women's reproductive health.

**Selected References**

None

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