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Ethnopharmacological Note

Note on the Use of *Stenochlaena palustris* (Burm.f.) Bedd. (Blechnaceae) by a Chakma tribal healer of Khagrachari district, Bangladesh to treat testicular atrophy

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Stenochlaena palustris (Burm.f.) Bedd. (Blechnaceae family) is an edible species of fern found in countries like Bangladesh, India and Malaysia. In English, it is known as the climbing swamp fern. The species has been reported from Khagrachari district in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the southeast corner of Bangladesh, where it is used by the Chakma tribal healers for medicinal purposes. In Chakma language, the plant is known as archanga. Folk medicinal healers around the Upper Songkhla Lake in Thailand reportedly use decoction of the whole plant orally to treat fever (Neamsuvan et al., 2015). In the Angamaly region of Ernakulam district, Kerala, India, the local inhabitants use leaf juice to cure fever (Augustin & Thomas, 2015). Antioxidant and antibacterial properties have been reported for this fern species from Malaysia, where it also has indigenous use against fever (Ponnusamy et al., 2013). Information about phytotherapeutic use of this fern species was obtained from Bijendro Chakma, a male Chakma tribal healer, 85 years old, who practiced among the Chakma tribal community in Dharmapur village in Khagrachari district, Bangladesh. The healer used leaves of the plant to treat testicular atrophy. In this disorder, the male testes decrease in size and may be accompanied by loss of function. The disorder has no known cure in allopathic medicine. The Chakma healer topically applied paste of leaves to the scrotum twice daily till cure. To our knowledge, this is the first described use of the plant for treatment of testicular atrophy. The plant was collected from forest areas adjoining Dharmapur village in Khagrachari district with the help of the Chakma tribal healer and identified by Mr. Monjur-Ul-Kadir Mia, ex-Principal Scientific Officer and Curator of the Bangladesh National Herbarium. Plant specimen was deposited at the Medicinal Plant Collection Wing of the University of Development Alternative (Accession Number 1276/2012).

References

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Figure 1. *Stenochlaena palustris* (Burm.f.) Bedd.