

# HERBAL MEDICINES IN CHILDREN: BETWEEN ADVICE GIVING AND SELF-MEDICATION

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## Background

Herbal medicines (HM) are those with active ingredients made from plant parts, such as leaves, roots or flowers. However, being 'natural' does not necessarily mean they are safe to take.<sup>(1)</sup> Taking HMs may not be suitable for children: as for all medicines. The NHS recommends that parents ask to paediatrician or pharmacist before giving a HM to their children.<sup>(1)</sup>



**Purpose**  
To investigate HM use in the paediatric population (0–18 years).



## Material and methods

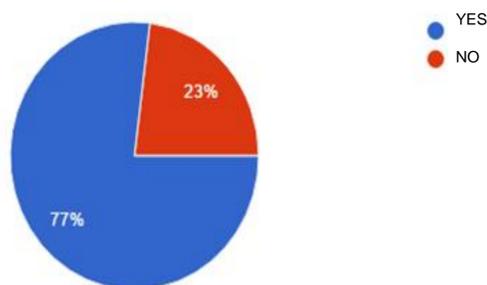
We conducted a prospective study, using a questionnaire delivered to parents waiting in a paediatric practice office. Questions concerned: most used HMs, general opinion about HMs and practical experience (as their efficacy and side effects).

## Results

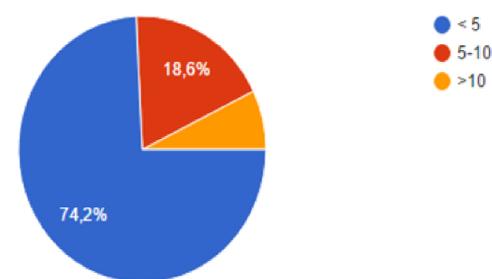
139 questionnaires collected



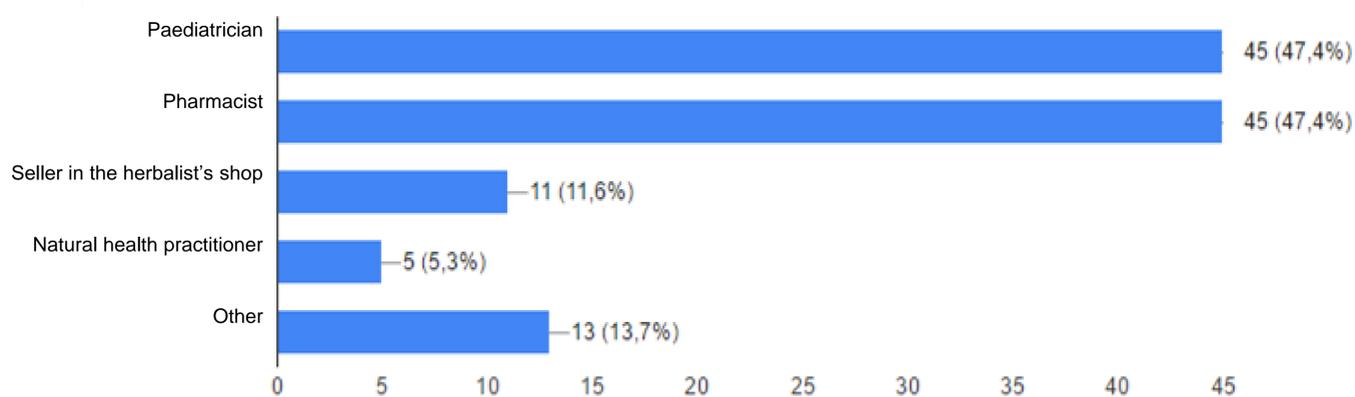
Have you ever bought an herbal medicines for your son?



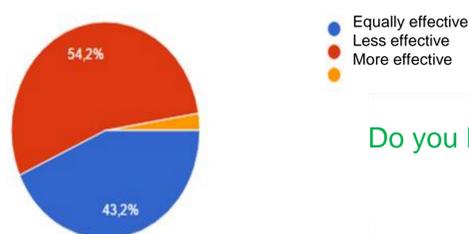
If your answer is yes, how many times it happens on average a year?



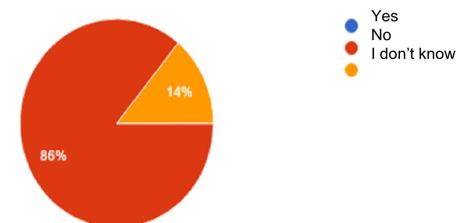
Who suggested it?



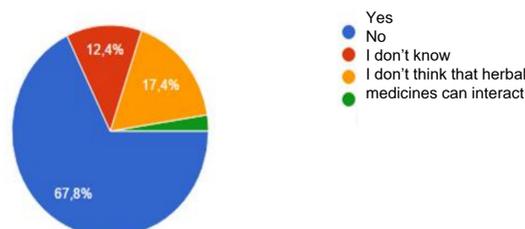
How do you consider herbal medicines efficacy compared to conventional medicine?



Do you think that herbal medicines could give some adverse drug reaction?



Do you know that herbal medicine can interact also with other substances?



## Conclusion

Even if this subject is relevant and our data show that HMs are frequently used in children, overall information are lacking in the literature. Hence one of our purposes would be to implement our study, extending it to a more widespread population.