

Temperate and Tropical Pharmacopoeias: How Different Are They?

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Dan Moerman (1991) introduced regression residual analysis as a tool for analyzing medicinal floras. In a recent publication (Moerman et al. 1999), he and colleagues found remarkable consistency among tropical pharmacopoeias. The one tropical example they analyzed appeared to be very different. Examining my data from the Shuar of Amazonian Ecuador reveals a contrasting pattern. Differences between the tropics and temperate zone are not as great as might be expected. In part, this is due to the use of introduced plants as medicines and the near ubiquitous medicinal utilization of widespread families such as Apiaceae, Asteraceae, Lamiaceae, and Solanaceae.