

Cross-cultural Phylogenetic Medical Ethnobotany

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Ethnobotany has proven to be a valuable method to find new herbal medicine and plant-derived drugs, but given limited resources, thousands of plants to consider, and many cultures to investigate, where can we focus our attention? I explore a new way to determine plants with high medical potential that are worthy of further investigation by finding related plants from unconnected cultures used to treat related diseases, corroborating that the plants are biologically active. Herbal remedies for diabetes and eczema collected from herbalists from four cultures around Manhattan, NY – Ayurvedic, Chinese, European/North American, and Latin American – are compared.