

4 January 1977

Subject: A Classification of Medicinal Folklore Terminology

To: Robert E. Perdue, Jr.

The attached classification, which includes about 300 terms that describe medicinal ailments or disorders, was put together sometime in early 1975. In 1975, such a classification was being developed for the folklore paper to be presented at the symposium. I discarded the classification for two reasons (1) It is difficult to separate general terms from the specific terms - like trying to define species and genera and families, and (2) I was uncertain about which terms and disorders are most frequently reported in the folklore literature. Before this classification was prepared, more than 600 terms were compiled from a review of Watt & Breyerbrandijk "Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Southern and Eastern Africa", and definitions were written and typed on many of these (about 50 pages).

A major emphasis in this classification concerning physiological disorders (IV) was:

- A. Plants used as remedies for diseases or symptoms that appear externally and often treated by external application (dermatotherapy) - pages 1-3.
- B. Plants used to treat internal diseases or symptoms of internal disorders - pages 4-9.

On page 7, number 11, should read - "Plants used as remedies for parasitic diseases". The word parasitic was apparently left out. This is the category that is of interest to you but also see page 2 under #1.

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(Title)

POSSIBLE CLASSIFICATION
OF FOLKLORE TERMINOLOGY

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(Date)

I. PLANTS REGARDED, BELIEVED, SUSPECTED OR REPORTED AS BEING POISONOUS

II. PLANTS USED AS POISONS, INSECTICIDES

A. Poisons (Arrow and Fish)

1. arrow poisons
homicidal
suicidal
lion and leopard poison
ordeal poison
2. fish poison
narcotic poison

B. Insecticides

vermin
kills maggots

III. PLANTS USED TO TREAT OR HEAL WOUNDS AND OTHER MECHANICAL TYPES OF INJURIES

septic wounds
scarifications
cuts
bruises
sprains
fractures
dressings
contusions

IV. PLANTS USED TO TREAT PHYSIOLOGICAL OR MORPHOLOGICAL ABNORMALITIES

A. Plants Used As Remedies For Diseases Or Symptoms That Appear Externally And Often Treated By External Application (Dermatotherapy)

1. Skin problems referred to as diseases or from disease-causing organisms (except eyes)
 - a. Skin diseases from parasitic organisms
 - scabies
 - head lice
 - ringworm
 - b. Skin diseases usually from bacterial organisms
 - ecthyma
 - erysipelas
 - leprosy
 - lupus
 - venereal diseases (gonorrhoea and syphilis)
 - furuncles
 - yaws
 - impetigo
 - c. Skin diseases or symptoms of viral origin
 - measles
 - smallpox
 - oxanthematous eruptions
 - d. Cancerous skin conditions
 - benign tumours
 - cancerous sores
 - callous ulcer (?)
 - warts (?)
 - corns (?)
 - cancer
2. Skin problems which are not usually associated with disease-causing organisms
 - a. Dermal problems which are often localized but are not swellings of organs or major glands
 - abscesses
 - boils
 - blisters
 - carbuncles
 - chafes of the skin
 - chancre
 - chaps
 - cutaneous lesions

dandruff
eczema
itches
leucoderma
pimples
purulent sores
pustules
skin eruptions
skin lesions
suppurations of the skin
ulcers
urticaria

b. Swellings and related conditions

abdominal swellings
angina
dropsy
edema
glandular swellings
goitre
hemorrhoids
hydrocele
oedema
piles
scrofulous sores
scrofulous swellings
sore breasts (?)
spongy gums (?) swollen gums (?)
swellings (general)
swellings of the groin (?)
swellings of the legs
swelling of the mumps
swelling of the neck
swollen feet

3. Eye problems or diseases

maladies of the eye
inflamed eyes
sore eyes
conjunctivitis
ophthalmia
ulcer of the eye
pink eye

B. Plants Used To Treat Internal Diseases Or Symptoms
Of Internal Disorders

1. Plants used as tonics, stimulants or excitants
for anemia, nausea, weakness or delirium
2. Plants used as stomachics
loss of appetite
anorexia
3. Plants used as antiemetics
vomiting
vomiting in yellow fever
4. Plants used as antibilious
hepatic conditions
biliousness
5. Plants used as hemeostatics
hemorrhage
6. Plants used to treat abdominal and intestinal
disorders of a general nature
peptic ulcer (?)
dyspepsia
abdominal pains
abdominal upsets
abdominal troubles
abdominal heaviness
stomachache or pain
intestinal complaints
indigestion
epigastric pains
flatulence
heartburn
colic
gastritis
cramps

7. Plants used for treating pains or aches (often as analgesics)

a. Bodily and muscular pains

rheumatism
shoulder aches
lumbar pain
lumbago
pains in the back
gout
sciatica
thoracic pain
acute appendicitis
pains in the loin
chest complaints (?)

b. Dental problems

toothache
gingivitis
inflammation of the gums
pain of gum boils
bleeding gums (?)

c. Throat problems

sore throat
tonsillitis

d. Head problems

earache
headache
migraine

e. Menstrual and pregnancy problems

post partum pain
menstrual pain
uterine pain

8. Plants used for treating respiratory problems (often as expectorants)

colds
coughs
asthma
influenza
catarrh

bronchitis
 pulmonary tuberculosis
 croup
 pulmonary affections
 difficult breathing
 pleurisy
 lung ailments
 pneumonia
 coryza
 tuberculosis
 congestion in the head
 inflammation of mucous membranes - eye and throat
 throat maladies
 laryngitis
 catarrhal affections
 emphysema

9. Plants used as febrifuges (antipyretic)

fevers
 chills
 intermittent fevers

10. Plants used to treat excretory ailments

- a. renal conditions
kidney conditions
- b. bladder conditions (pains)
- c. strangury
urethritis
urinary diseases
dysuria
- d. proctitis
gangrenous rectitis (?)
- e. Plants used as purgatives for:
 - chronic constipation
 - bowel complaints
 - griping
- f. antidysenteric
antidiarrhetic
- g. diuretic
- h. antidiuretic

11. Plants used as remedies for diseases (anthelmintics and antibiotics)

a. Plants used as anthelmintics (vermifuges and vermicides)

tapeworm
roundworm
guinea worm
bilharziasis
elephantiasis
shistosomiasis
"dinohana" (white worm)
ascites
bilhazia
intestinal parasites
ancylostomiasis

b. Plants used as remedies against diseases caused by protozoan parasites

blackwater fever
malaria
sleeping sickness
typhanites

c. Plants used as remedies against diseases from bacterial organisms (antibacterial)

venereal diseases (gonorrhoea, syphilis, blenorhoea)
whooping cough
typhoid

d. Plants used as remedies against diseases caused by viral organisms (antivirotic)

cholera
yellow fever

12. Plants used to treat diabetes

13. Plants used as antidotes for poisons and bites

a. Poisons

ptomaine
clematis poisoning
synadenium poisoning
ammonia poisoning
blood poisoning
alcohol poisoning

b. Bites

snakebites
scorpion stings
centipede bites
insect bites

14. Plants used as antilethics

cystitis
calculous diseases
cysts
lithias
gravel

15. Plants used against internal cancer

internal tumors
internal sores (?)
enlarged spleen (?)

16. Plants used as emmenagogues

female ailments
irregular and excessive menses
menstruation
barrenness
menstrual disorders
amenorrhoea
menorrhagia
uterine discharges

17. Plants used to treat women with pregnancy problems

- a. pregnant women
post parturient troubles
calm fetal movements
- b. abortifacients

18. Plants used to treat sexual problems

- a. sterility
impotency
- b. contraceptives

19. Plants used to treat nervous disorders or symptoms

epilepsy
spasms
mental diseases
hypertension
convulsions (?)
palpitations (?)
restlessness
madness
rabies (?)
nervous disorders
insomnia
sleeplessness