



Section D

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A survey on raw materials used as Jatamansa in Sri Lanka

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Nardostachys grandiflora DC (Valerianaceae) is a perennial herb, which is found in high elevations of the Himalayas and is not found in Sri Lanka. The rhizome of this species which is known as Jatamansa is a very important raw material used in Ayurveda. *Balanophora fungosa* JR & G. Forst (Balanophoraceae) is known to be used deliberately as an unauthorized substitute for Jatamansa in the local herbal industry. An extensive survey was carried out by collecting information from Ayurvedic physicians and analyzing samples of raw materials sold in the crude drug market. Five representative provinces, i.e., Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central provinces were selected for the survey. Samples of Jatamansa were collected from ten raw material dealers while distributing a common questionnaire among another ten in each province. The same questionnaire was distributed among fifty traditional ayurvedic physicians in the above provinces to obtain information on the nature of raw materials they use as Jatamansa. Based on the macroscopic and organoleptic characters studied, the collected samples could easily be separated into two distinct groups which in turn were identified as *Nardostachys grandiflora* and *Balanophora fungosa*. According to the samples collected, an average of 80 % consume *Balanophora fungosa* as Jatamansa. Based on the information gathered from raw material dealers, an average of 74 % use *Balanophora fungosa* as Jatamansa while an average of 66 % of traditional physicians unintentionally prescribe *Balanophora fungosa* as Jatamansa. Hence it could be concluded that the majority consume *Balanophora fungosa* as Jatamansa instead of *Nardostachys grandiflora*. Further, it was noted that consumers in the Northern Province used a considerable percentage of genuine material (*Nardostachys grandiflora*) as Jatamansa but in the Western Province, all market samples of Jatamansa were *Balanophora fungosa*. The results of this survey clearly prove the extensive deliberate substitution of genuine Jatamansa by *Balanophora fungosa* in the local crude drug market. This in turn opens up many questions to be answered with regard to the quality of drugs manufactured and the treatments for which Jatamansa is used as one of the major ingredients.