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Ethnopharmacological Note

Note on a new use of *Senna obtusifolia* (L.) H.S. Irwin & R.C. Barneby (Fabaceae) against itches

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Senna obtusifolia (L.) H.S. Irwin & R.C. Barneby in Bangladesh is known locally as 'echkigard'. The plant can also be found in India and various African countries. Seeds of the plant are used in skin diseases, ringworm and eczema while leaves are used in constipation by the various tribal people of Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, India (2014). The Badagry people of Lagos State, Nigeria, use decoction of whole plant for male infertility (Makinde et al., 2015). Decoction of leaf is taken for blood purification by the People of Gurara Local Government Area, Niger State, Nigeria (Adelanwa and Haruna, 2013). In northeast Brazil, leaves are used abortifacient, laxative, sedative and against amenorrhea and rheumatism (Agra et al., 2008). The Takkad people of Kaduna State, Nigeria, use the plant against digestive system ailments (Mathias et al., 2013). *S. obtusifolia* was collected from Sylhet Division in Bangladesh, identified at the Bangladesh National Herbarium (Accession Number 43776) and a folk medicinal practitioner (FMP), named Md. Babul Mia was observed to use the plant to treat any sort of itches. In his method, freshly prepared leaf paste was topically applied to the affected area once or twice daily till cure. Itching (pruritus) is a common problem in Bangladesh, arising from many factors like hot temperatures with high humidity, unhygienic conditions of living, insect bites, and even as a manifestation of an allergic reaction. Although over the counter (OTC) drugs are available against itching, these are not available to the rural people of Bangladesh, where there may not be a single dispensary within a cluster of villages. As such, the plant may prove to be useful to be cultivated as one or two plants in a village homestead or several plants in one village. Some *Senna* genus plants are most commonly used as laxatives (Pothitirat et al., 2016); the use of leaves of *S. obtusifolia* to treat itching appears to be a novel use of this *Senna* plant.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest associated with this work.

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Figure 1. *Senna obtusifolia* (L.) H.S. Irwin & R.C. Barneby