

**Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge: a study based on knowledge transmission
methods used in the field of Indigenous Medicine in Sri Lanka**

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Indigenous knowledge (IK) also known as local knowledge or traditional wisdom mainly remains tacit in nature, empirical and resides only within individuals and is difficult to articulate. Sri Lanka has its own unique and remarkable indigenous medical system handed down from generation to generation. The objectives of this study were to explore the methods of IK transmission used in the field of Indigenous medicine in Sri Lanka, to investigate the barriers against the popularity of methods of indigenous medical transmission among the general public, and to suggest recommendations for promoting, dissemination and preservation of the indigenous medical knowledge (IMK). Two research tools were employed for collecting data, namely literary surveys and focus group discussions. Visiting lecturers of the Institute of Indigenous Medicine and special physicians of the National Ayurvedic Teaching Hospital (Borella) and six major branches of indigenous medical fields were treated as the focus group of this study. Although IK extends to a broad spectrum this research was limited only to the field of the indigenous medicine. The results highlight that generational succession is the main method of transformation of IK, especially the relevant IMK expertise. Ola-leaf manuscripts and hand-written manuscripts are the major written methods and Vedageta and incantations as verbal methods. Meanwhile, intangible methods of Dutha Lakshan and Kem have also facilitated the transmission of the IK of indigenous medical field in Sri Lanka. The study enlightened that *Guru Mushtiya* was the major barrier to transmitting IMK to the younger generation. These methods are difficult to understand and expressed in a very authentic manner and they are used in a very secret way which add to further barriers. The majority of the next generation of current indigenous medical practitioners are not involved in practice due to various socio-economic factors. The study has revealed that most of the IK of indigenous medicine have disappeared with the demise of practitioners. It is recommended that remaining IMK has to be preserved at any cost to maintain the present status quo of the present day in Sri Lanka and the responsible authorities should take immediate action to record, manage and preserve this invaluable IMK for the wealth of the coming generation.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous medical knowledge, Knowledge management, Knowledge preservation