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Medicinal Importance of *Berberis lycium* Royle Grown in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and threats to its conservation

Syeda Maria Fiaz Bukhari

University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, India

Berberis lycium Royle is an important medicinal plant found in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Root bark of *Berberis lycium* Royle is used by inhabitants for the treatment of diabetes, toothache, wound healing, broken bones repair, stomach ulcer and arthritis. Reactive oxygen species (ROS) are produced in body during normal respiration process. These are responsible for many chronic diseases. Currently there is need to find the best natural antioxidant so that could help our body to maintain its normal function without any side effect or toxicity. Phenolic contents are also responsible for the medicinal activity of the plants. Plants showing more medicinal activity could be used to derive modern medicines. Environment changes composition of plant so its medicinal properties also varies in depending on its environment. *Berberis lycium* Royle is a powerful antioxidant and medicinal plant. Present study revealed that plants collected from Bagna showed highest antioxidant activity with lowest IC₅₀ of 8.69 µg/g in thorn while IC₅₀ for fruits of plant samples from Lawat and Slam pura were 31.01 µg/g and 34.37 µg/g respectively. Highest phenolic contents were observed in leaves of plants collected from Chanjhal were 88.66 µg/g ± 1.07 of GAE. *Berberis lycium* Royle from these areas of District Neelum, Azad Kashmir showed maximum medicinal potential and could be used for further studies in future. Due to unawareness this medicinal plant is at great risk from its collection without any planning and use as firewood. Livestock in the area also pose great threat to this plant.

Syeda Maria01@gmail.com