Medicinal plants used traditionally for skin related problems in the South Balkan and East Mediterranean

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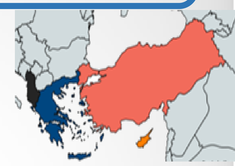
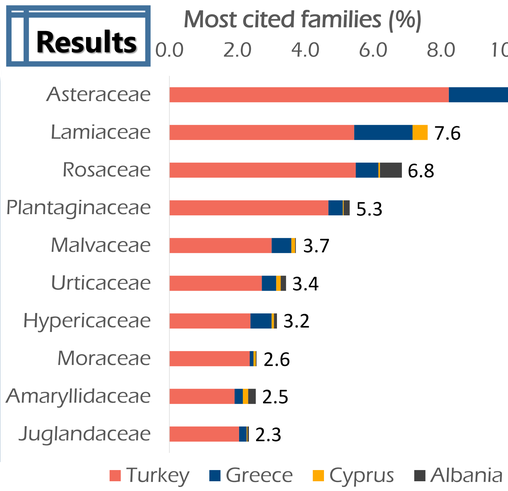
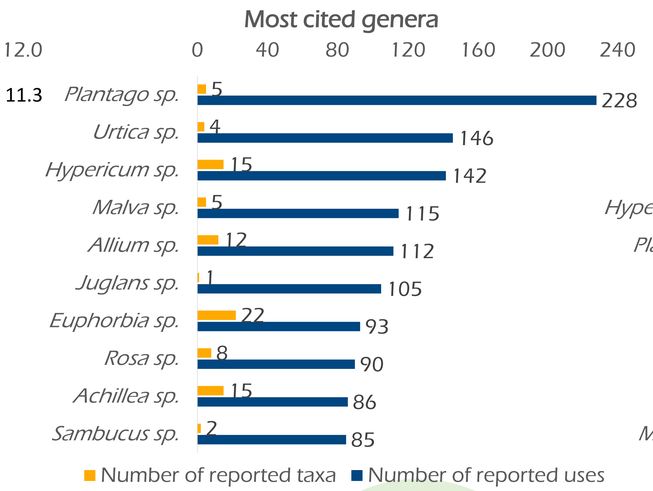


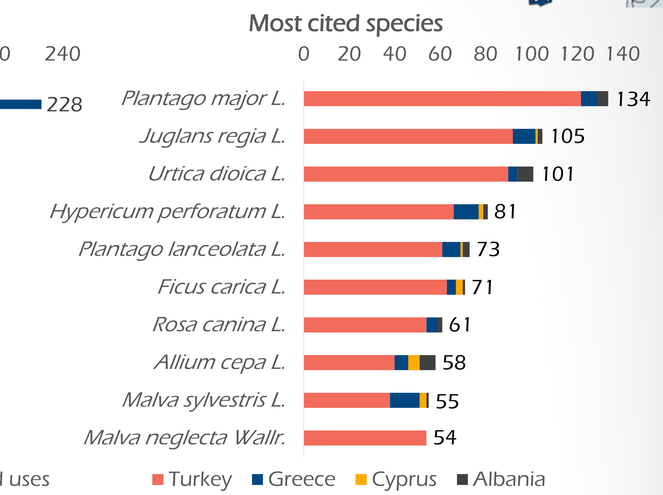
Introduction

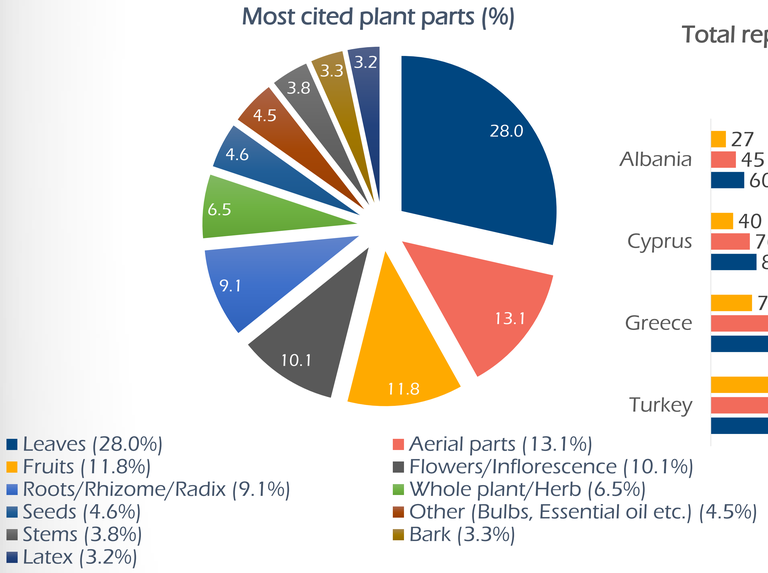
Within the scope of the European project EthnoHERBS (H2020-MSCA-RISE-823973), a review research was conducted to provide an overview of the ethnobotanical knowledge of medicinal plants and traditional medical practices for the treatment of skin disorders in Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. The geographical and ecological characteristics of the Balkan Peninsula and Mediterranean basin, along with the historical connection among those countries, gave rise to the development of a distinct flora and the use of common medicinal plants against various skin ailments, respectively. The investigation was focused on the detailed study of 126 ethnobotanical surveys conducted in these areas and the species used against skin ailments were singled out.

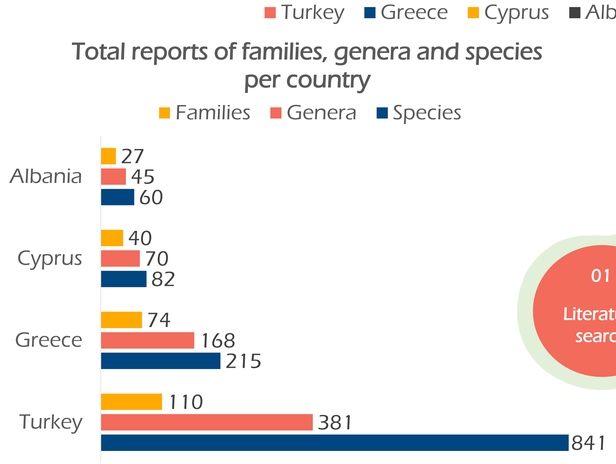
Results

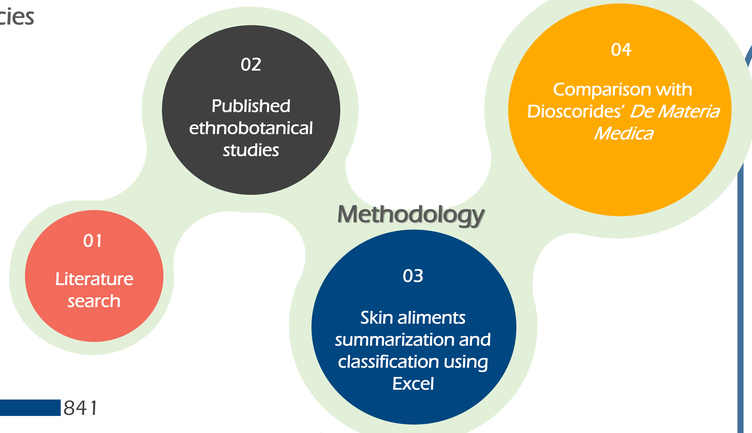






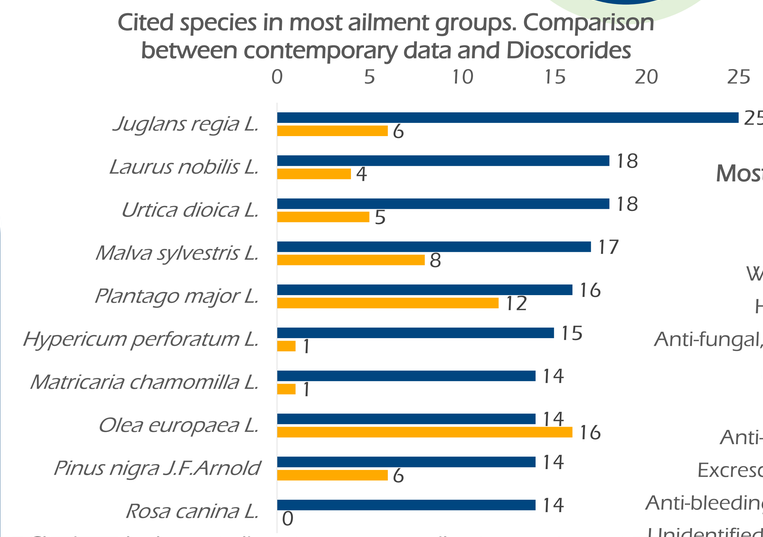


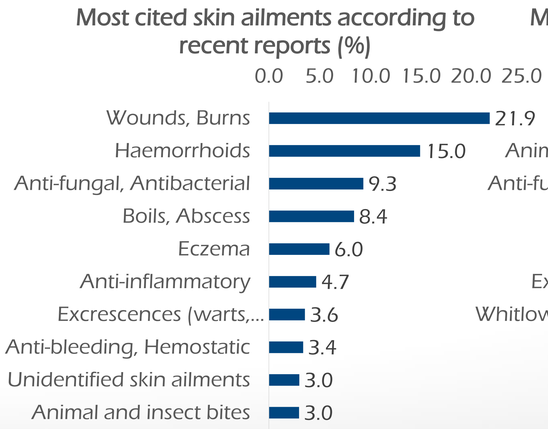


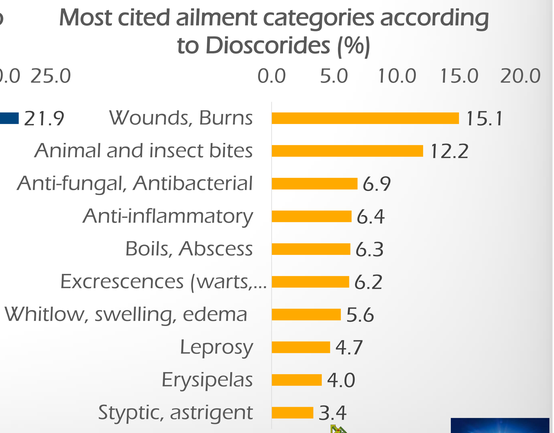


Methods

The most important scientific databases such as Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect and Google scholar were browsed to perform a literature search using specific keywords in order to identify all the published ethnobotanical field studies conducted in Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey up until May 2020. Only studies that included interviews with informants were considered. Most of them (101 studies) concerned traditional medicine in Turkey, 14 studies were conducted to Greece, 7 studies to Albania and 5 studies to Cyprus. The skin diseases extracted from the publications were classified based on the terminology used in dermatology and grouped in 37 different categories. The botanical names of the plants reported were validated through the databases "The Plant List (http://www.theplantlist.org/)" and "The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (http://www.gbif.org)".







Conclusion

The bibliographical analysis showed that 948 taxa belonging to 417 different genera and 111 different families are used in the treatment of skin related problems in the study areas. Their usage is internal (decoction, infusion etc.), or external (compress, poultice, ointment etc.). In order to relate this ethnopharmacological knowledge and trace its expansion and diversification through centuries, a comparison of findings was made with the use of the medicinal species mentioned in Dioscorides' "*De Materia Medica*" for skin disorders. Our findings confirm the primary hypothesis that people in Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey are very close related in terms of using traditional medicinal practices. As a fact, this highlights the necessity to carry out more ethnobotanical field studies in these areas but also in other countries of the Balkan Peninsula and the Mediterranean basin, in order to reveal medical practices and treatment remedies not yet encountered.

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