

## ABSTRACT

*Mandi serom*, a Malay traditional postpartum bath prepared with a wide variety of plants, is a conventional method used among Malay midwives (*bidan kampung*) for postnatal recovery and rejuvenation therapy. This study documents the knowledge regarding medicinal plants and traditional uses pertaining to *mandi serom* (Malay traditional postpartum bath) in the Malay culture. Field investigations included face-to-face interviews and field trips with 15 Malay midwives in different areas within three districts in Kedah. *Mandi serom* comprises 40 plant species belonging to 26 families, most of which are native species. The most common group of plants is trees, followed by zingibers, herbaceous, shrubs, and climbers. Only three species are similarly used by all the midwives which are *Cymbopogon nardus* (*serai wangi*), *Lawsonia inermis* (*inai*) and *Pandanus amaryllifolius* (*pandan*). The majority of Malay women in Kedah put their trust in midwives to conduct *mandi serom* during the postpartum confinement period. The plants are used to rid the body of odour, for spiritual cleansing, for hygienic purposes, and to ward off mystical forces known as *makhluk halus* in the Malay culture. They believe that without proper formulation from the midwife, *mandi serom* may not be healing and effectual. This is the first systematic study of Malay postpartum bath (*mandi serom*) in northern Malaysia. This study helps to preserve traditional knowledge of Malay midwifery practice and protect Malay natural heritage, and at the same time these new ethnobotanical records can be subjected to clinical studies and serve as a guideline for women healthcare in Malaysia