**MEDICINAL LICHENS OF YUMAN, RARAMURI AND MIXTEC PEOPLE OF MEXICO**

Joshua Anthuan Bautista González1\*; Adriana Montoya Esquivel2; Robert Bye3; María de los Angeles Herrera Campos1

1Laboratorio de Líquenes Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; 2Centro de Investigación en Ciencias Biológicas, Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala; 3Laboratorio de Etnobotánica, Jardín Botánico, Instituto d Biología, UNAM. \*E-mail: joshua@ciencias.unam.mx

Different original cultures of the world have used medicinal lichens since millennia ago, particularly in Mexico these have been documented starting in the 16th century. Up to date, lichens are still employed in Mexican traditional medicine, however the studies dealing with this topic are scarce. Our purpose in this research is to describe and to analyze the knowledge of lichens in traditional medicine by Yuman, Raramuri and Mixtec people applying field work with anthropological and biological methods. Raramuri and Yuman (Kiliwa, Pai pai, Kumiai, and Cucapa) live North of Mexico and Mixtec in the South. Mixtec and Raramuri inhabit temperate zones, while Yuman settle in arid areas. A total of 151 interviews were applied to inquire about the lichen use and local nomenclature. Three hundred and twenty four specimens were collected in field trips guided by locals. Fifty seven taxa were identified, 36 with medicinal use while the rest have ludic and/or decorative purposes, or without any use at all. *Usnea* and *Xanthoparmelia* stand out with eleven and eight species, respectively. The three studied cultural groups know and employ lichens to treat gastrointestinal and urogenital diseases. Only Raramuri and Mixtec use them to relieve respiratoryillnesses, skin lesions, and diabetes. Intercultural cognitive convergence is discussed, since several persons share the knowledge on lichen uses, in spite of belonging to different cultures and living in different geographic and ecological context. It is concluded that lichens are still very important in traditional medicine of the studied groups, although in some cases this traditional knowledge only lives in the memory of elderly people whose languages are about to extinguish, such as Kiliwa. However, in every visited town there are families fighting to preserve their traditions.