ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Traditional Malay Remedies for Women's Health: Transliteration and Scientific Insights from Malay Medical Manuscript MSS 1796

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Malay medical manuscript *MSS 1796*, preserved at the Malay National Manuscript Centre, documents extensive therapeutic knowledge that reflects the intellectual heritage of the Malay world. Among its diverse medical prescription, remedies pertaining to women's health are notably prominent yet remain underexplored. **Objective:** This study examines women's health-related remedies in *MSS 1796*, focusing on three key conditions: postpartum disorders (*meroyan*), uterine prolapse (*menyacakkan peranakan*), and abdominal pain (*rengat* or *sakit ari-arinya*). **Methods:** Seventeen pages of *MSS 1796* were transliterated using standard transliteration practices by incorporating amendments to the text through corrected spellings and the addition of punctuation. Brackets "(…)" were used to indicate adjusted spellings while illustrations inserted using the phrase *"ini rajahnya […]"*, accompanied by the original images. Subsequently, the materia medica mentioned in the remedies were cross-referenced with studies sourced from PubMed and Google Scholar to assess their scientific relevance. **Results:** Fifteen remedies related to the key conditions were identified along with six other conditions. The remedies consisted of both single- and multi-ingredient, indicating the sophistication of traditional Malay pharmacology. *Oryza sativa* was frequently cited for postpartum recovery and uterine health, with scientific evidence supporting its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Other plants identified included *Curcuma longa* (turmeric) and *Trachyspermum roxburghianum* (cumin), both of which have pharmacological support for antioxidant activity and abdominal pain relief. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the significance of *MSS 1796* in preserving therapeutic knowledge related to women's health. By integrating transliteration with published pharmacological information, the study demonstrates the potential of Malay medical heritage to contribute to contemporary approaches in women's health management.

INTRODUCTION

A Malay manuscript refers to written works in the Malay language produced on readily available materials and encompassing a wide range of knowledge and wisdom (Wan Ali, 2017). They are kept by various institutions such as the National Library of Malaysia, the National Archive, the Malay National Manuscript Centre (*Pusat Kebangsaan Manuskrip Melayu*), the Malaysian Institute for Language and Literature (*Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*), state museums as well as abroad. Although around 22,000 Malay manuscripts are estimated to have existed, only 5,252 are known to have been collected and kept safely at the National Library of Malaysia (Hadi, 2024). In addition, a Malay medical manuscript specifically contains knowledge related to Malay medicine, traditional health practices, and therapeutic treatments practiced by Malay ancestors that are commonly known as *Kitab Tib*. (Harun Mat Piah, 2006).

The Malay Medical manuscript MSS 1796 is tagged as *Kitab Tib* by the authoritative at *Malay National Manuscript Centre* because of its medical knowledge that exceeds 80% of the content. This manuscript consists of 149 pages. According to Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (2024), MSS 1796 is a manuscript written on European laid paper and contains formulations for treating headaches, eye diseases, and various other ailments including yaws. Moreover, the manuscript includes neither a colophon nor a title, limiting further insight into its author and its original context. Nevertheless, the nonexistence of the author's profile is common for many Malay medical manuscripts either the causes were due to missing pages or the Malay authors preferred to remain unknown. The Malay authors have been taught to abide by the ethical values of humility and sincerity while writing as the knowledge comes from the Creator and not solely from their intelligence (Mohd Affendi, 2021).

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In the era of globalisation, the use of natural ingredients has grown considerably, supported by the belief that they are safer, more sustainable, and more aligned with traditional healing philosophies (Kumar et al., 2021). Across communities, there is a renewed interest in ethnomedicine, with many individuals turning to natural-based therapies despite the limited scientific validation available for certain herbal remedies. Historically, plant-based ingredients and traditional formulations have played a central role in women's health across all life stages, from adolescence and the reproductive years to menopause. Ethnomedical practices commonly utilise medicinal herbs to relieve menstrual pain (dysmenorrhea), regulate hormonal balance, support fertility, prevent miscarriage, and manage menopausal symptoms such as vasomotor instability, mood changes, and sleep disturbances (Su, 2022; Takahashi & Johnson, 2015).

Women's health is influenced by a range of conditions, including premenstrual syndrome (PMS), polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, infertility, and postmenopausal disorders. Many of these conditions are associated with hormonal imbalances, inflammation, or oxidative stress, which can be managed or mitigated through the bioactive compounds found in medicinal plants (Su, 2022; Geller et al., 2025). For example, phytoestrogens derived from soy have been shown to mimic estrogenic activity and reduce menopausal symptoms, while herbs such as *Vitex agnus-cactus* (chasteberry) are known to regulate menstrual cycles and alleviate PMS (Höller et al., 2024; Luan et al., 2025). Additionally, *Curcuma longa* (turmeric) and *Zingiber officinale* (ginger) possess anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that may help reduce pelvic pain and inflammation in disorders like endometriosis (Vallée and Lecarpentier, 2020; Zhou et al., 2022).

Therefore, research on natural ingredients is crucial for identifying safe and effective treatments for women's health-related conditions. As conventional hormonal therapies and pain-management medications often carry undesirable side effects, natural alternatives may offer complementary or preventive solutions that align with holistic and personalised approaches to healthcare. This strengthens the need to re-examine Malay medical manuscripts, which preserve a rich repository of ethnomedical knowledge and diverse formulations used historically to treat women's ailments. These manuscripts provide valuable insight into traditional therapeutic strategies that may inform modern research. For example, a promising area of ongoing preclinical and clinical investigation involves plant-derived compounds and dietary interventions for the management of endometriosis, aimed at reducing inflammation, inhibiting abnormal tissue growth, and improving patients' quality of life (Meresman et al., 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative, descriptive research design, combining library research, transliteration, and content analysis. The approach was supported by a systematic cross-referencing of traditional formulations with contemporary literature to assess their scientific relevance.

Manuscript Selection

The Malay medical manuscript *MSS 1796*, one of the *Kitab Tib* collections housed at Malay National Manuscript Centre, was selected for analysis. The manuscript is in good physical condition, with legible text and complete pagination, making it suitable for transliteration and study. Previous research had covered pages 1–40; this study extended the analysis to pages 41–57, which contained multiple formulations related to women's health.

Transliteration Process

Seventeen consecutive pages were transliterated from *Jawi* into *Rumi* script using established transliteration guidelines provided by Malaysian Institute for Language and Literature. Each *Jawi* character was systematically paired with its Roman equivalent, and adjustments were made to reflect current Malay spelling conventions. Brackets "(…)" were used to denote modernised spellings, while original spellings were retained in the appendix. Ambiguous or illegible terms were recorded as image snippets from the manuscript. References, including *A Vocabulary of Malay Medical Terms* (P.N. Gerrard), the Malay Literature Reference Centre (*Pusat Rujukan Persuratan Melayu*) database, and prior transliterations of Malay medical manuscripts, were consulted to confirm terminology.

Identification of Women's Health Formulations

Of 78 remedies documented in the transliterated text from 17 pages of the MSS 1796, 15 were identified as directly related to women's health. Emphasis was placed on remedies for postpartum disorders ('meroyan'), uterine prolapse ('menyacakkan peranakan'), postpartum abdominal pain ('rengat atau sakit ari-arinya') and any that related to women. Each formulation was catalogued using the format "1796.X.Y," where X represents the disease and Y the specific formulation number.

Content Analysis and Materia Medica Identification

The transliterated text was analyzed to extract disease descriptions, formulations, and *materia medica*. Diseases were matched with modern biomedical nomenclature using authoritative references and online medical databases. Plant ingredients were identified and validated using Malaysia Biodiversity Information System (MyBIS), National Parks Board (NParks), and standard ethnobotanical references to confirm scientific names.

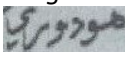
Scientific Validation

To evaluate scientific relevance, each identified *materia medica* was cross-referenced with pharmacological studies indexed in PubMed and Google Scholar. Boolean operators were applied in the search strategy, e.g., ("plant name" OR "scientific name") AND ("in vitro" OR "in vivo" OR "animal study" OR "clinical trial") NOT "meta-analysis." Inclusion criteria encompassed original research articles reporting *in vitro, ex vivo, in vivo*, or clinical studies. Review articles and meta-analyses were excluded before the retrieved studies were screened by title and abstract, and relevant full texts were reviewed. Data were managed in Mendeley for organisation.

RESULTS

Transliteration of text

[1796.19.01] *Sebagai lagi, jika meroyan itu sakit kulit perutnya, ambil daun pekan hitam, tarak (lama) masak jintan, maka disemburkan, maka yang diminum itu daun tambun tahi, ujung melukut, mata kunyit, dan jikalau tiada boleh minum akan buat lempeng beri makan.*

[1796.20.01] *Sebagai lagi ubat menyacakkan peranakan, maka ambil daun*  *segenggam herat (erat), ujung melukut, mata kunyit dan daun hinai (inai) segenggam herat (erat), maka tumbuk beri minum.*

[1796.21.01] *Sebagai lagi jikalau rengat peranakan, maka ambil daun deredap (dedap) dan bonglai, maka bakar tembikar ke api-api, masukkan ke dalam itu beri minum.*

[1796.22.01] *Sebagai lagi jika rengat ari-arinya, maka ambil daun berami, tampal pada ari-arinya.*

[1796.22.02] *(missing word) ambil daun cemperdik (cemperai), giling dengan hujung melukut (ujung melukut), mata kunyit, ramas beri minum maka hampasnya nyiur dibarutkan.*

[1796.22.03] *Sebagai lagi, ambil daun kerak nasi, maka tumbuk dengan hujung melukut (ujung melukut), mata kunyit, ramas beri minum.*

[1796.22.04] *Bab ini sakit ari-ari, maka ambil jerangau, maka pipis lumat-lumat maka tampalkan pada ari-arinya 'afiat.*

[1796.23.01] *Sebagai lagi jikalau meroyan itu berkancing giginya tiada khabar akan dirinya, maka ambil daun leban, tumbuk beri minum, masak jintan hitam, bawang putih kulitnya, semburkan pada tempat sakit itu, masak jintan hitam, bawang putih, dan lada sulah tiga biji, ambil daun ribu-ribu, seni giling lumat-lumat masak ujung melukut, mata kunyit tampalkan di betis 'afiat.*

[1796.24.01] *Sebagai lagi ubat meroyan, salung daunnya, dan daun telinga kerbau, dan kulit limau purut kikis di pohonnya, tumbuk ambil airnya beri minum dan hampasnya buat barut.*

[1796.24.02] *Sebagai lagi ubat meroyan, maka ambil kulit bangkal dan kulit deredap (dedap) sedikit, tumbuk ambil airnya, masak garam, jintan sedikit beri minum maka apabila helat (elat) bukan meroyan, jikalau panas meroyanlah dimakan lagi ubatnya.*

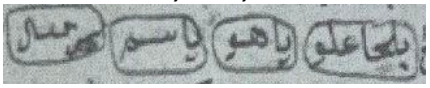
[1796.24.03] *Sebagai lagi ubat meroyan hinggap namanya dimana ia hendak sakit, maka ambil daun benalu, seni disembur pada tempat sakit itu.*

[1796.24.04] *Sebagai lagi meroyan, jikalau melontar*  *ambil daun kayu sugi, pucuk merah dan ambil rumput tinggi panjang*  *dia buah sena maka salit (calit) dibawahnya*.

[1796.26.01] *Bab ini sapulah budak didalam perut sekalipun keluar ulahnya ambil biji labu … (missing word) maka pipis sapukan pada sekalian tubuhnya dan (missing word) ampuan itu nescaya keluar ulahnya.*

[1796.27.01] *Sebagai lagi … (missing word) uri tembuni (uri terselindung), yang maka ambil daun terung asam sehelai yang kukur merah, maka pipiskan airnya air habu (abu), maka suruh minum 'afiat.*

[1796.41.01] *Ini ubat perempuan tiada beranak, maka disurah pada mengkawah putih maka basuh beri jernih airnya tujuh hari perbuat demikian itu jugak, nescaya beroleh anaknya insyaAllah taala inilah rajahnya*



Content Analysis and Materia Medica mentioned in the manuscript

In this study, 15 remedies were identified as related to women's health, of which 14 were plant-based and one

involved ritual practice. These remedies target conditions such as 'meroyan' (postpartum disorders), menyacakkan peranakan (uterine prolapse), and 'rengat *or* sakit ari-arinya' (abdominal pain), underscoring the manuscript's strong emphasis on maternal and reproductive health.

The content analysis revealed the use of several overlapping ingredients across different women's conditions, suggesting a shared pharmacological basis especially for reproductive and postpartum care. Further examination of the medical terminology and interpretation of the diseases enhances our understanding of these overlaps and their therapeutic significance. For instance, certain plants appeared repeatedly in remedies for both postpartum recovery and uterine prolapse, highlighting their perceived importance in Malay traditional medicine.

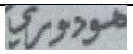
The materia medica recorded in the manuscript consists of 25 distinct ingredients. As categorised, 23 are plant-based and 2 are mineral-based ingredients. Among the identified materia medica, only 9 ingredients such as *bonglai, jerangau, jintan, kayu sugi, kerak nasi, labu, mata kunyit, telinga kerbau and ujung melukut/jerami* were found to be therapeutic in treating women's illnesses based on current scientific research. The materia medica identified through the transliteration text are presented in Tables 1 to 14 with their written names, scientific names, plant parts used, categories, and scientific references relevant to the associated treatments.

The ingredients for 'meroyan (sakit kulit perut)' is tabulated in Table 1 while the ingredients for 'menyacakkan peranakan' is tabulated in Table 2.

Table 1: Ingredients for 1796.19.01 'meroyan (sakit kulit perut)'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Pekan hitam*	Leaf	*Carya illinoinensis*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Jintan*	Seed	*Trachyspermum roxburghianum*	Plant-based	Significant antinociceptive effects (Kalaskar et al., 2024)
3.	*Tambun tahi*	Leaf	*Baccaurea parviflora*	Plant-based	-
4.	*Ujung melukut*	Germinating tip	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	Strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities (Thepthanee et al., 2021)
5.	*Mata kunyit*	Germinating tip	*Curcuma longa*	Plant-based	Improve atopic dermatitis-like symptom such as skin inflammation (Jayasinghe et al., 2025)

Table 2: Ingredients for 1796.20.01 'menyacakkan peranakan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.		Leaf	-	Plant-based	-
2.	*Ujung melukut*	Germinating tip	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	Strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities (Thepthanee et al., 2021)
3.	*Mata kunyit*	Germinating tip	*Curcuma longa*	Plant-based	Antioxidant effects (Guerrero - Romero et al., 2020) Bisacurone can modulate inflammation (He at al., 2023)
4.	*Inai*	Leaf	*Lawsonia inermis*	Plant-based	-

The ingredients for ''rengat peranakan' is tabulated in Table 3 while the ingredients for 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya' is tabulated in Table 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Table 3: Ingredients for 1796.21.01 'rengat peranakan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Dedap*	Leaf	*Erythrina subumbrans*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Bonglai*	*n.m.*	Zingiber cassumunar	Plant-based	Anti-inflammatory properties of the methanol extract (Khemawoot et al., 2016)

Table 4: Ingredients for 1796.22.01 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Jerami*	Leaf	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	-

Table 5: Ingredients for 1796.22.02 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Cemperai*	Leaf	*Champereia manillana*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Ujung melukut*	Germinating tip	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	-
3.	*Mata kunyit*	Germinating tip	*Curcuma longa*	Plant-based	Reduce the pain in dysmenorrhea (Utami et al., 2020)
4.	*Nyiur*	Dregs	*Cocos nucifera*	Plant-based	-

Table 6: Ingredients for 1796.22.03 for 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Kerak nasi*	Leaf	*Lindernia crustacea*	Plant-based	Considerable free radical scavenging activity and, antiproliferative and apoptosis-inducing ability (Swargiany et al., 2021)
2.	*Ujung melukut*	Germinating tip	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	-
3.	*Mata kunyit*	Germinating tip	*Curcuma longa*	Plant-based	Reduce the pain in dysmenorrhea (Utami et al., 2020)

Table 7: Ingredients for 1796.22.04 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Jerangau*	*n.m.*	*Acorus calamus*	Plant-based	Antispasmodic activity (Gilani et al., 2006) Anticholinesterase effect in rectus abdominis muscle (Vijayapandi et al., 2012)

The ingredients for 'meroyan (kancing gigi)' is tabulated in Table 8 while the ingredients for 'meroyan' is tabulated in Table 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Table 8: Ingredients for 1796.23.01 'meroyan (kancing gigi)'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Leban*	Leaf	*Vitex pinnata*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Jintan hitam*	Seed	*Nigella sativa*	Plant-based	-
3.	*Bawang putih*	Onion skin	*Allium sativum*	Plant-based	Antiepileptic activity of ethanolic extract (Savairam et al., 2024)
4.	*Lada sulah*	Leaf	*Piper nigrum*	Plant-based	Analgesic and anticonvulsant effects (Bukhari et al., 2013)
5.	*Ribu-ribu*	Leaf	*Lygodium scandens*	Plant-based	-
6.	*Ujung melukut*	Germinating tip	*Oryza sativa*	Plant-based	Prevent lipopolysaccharide-induced brain inflammation and cognitive impairment (Mastinu et al., 2019)
7.	*Mata kunyit*	Germinating tip	*Curcuma longa*	Plant-based	Potential anti-seizure activity (Choo et al., 2021)

Table 9: Ingredients for 1796.24.01 'meroyan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Salung*	Leaf	*Psychotria viridiflora*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Telinga kerbau*	Leaf	*Blumea balsamifera*	Plant-based	Borneol use in aromatherapy (Ma et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024)
3.	*Limau purut*	Fruit skin	*Citrus hystrix*	Plant-based	-

Table 10: Ingredients for 1796.24.02 'meroyan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Bangkal*	Fruit skin	*Ludekia bernardoi*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Dedap*	Fruit skin	*Erythrina subumbrans*	Plant-based	-
3.	*Garam*	-	Sodium chloride	Mineral-based	-
4.	*Jintan*	Seed	*Trachyspermum roxburghianum*	Plant-based	Antioxidant effect (Kalaskar et al., 2024)

Table 11: Ingredients for 1796.24.03 for 'meroyan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Benalu*	Leaf	*Hemigraphis colorata*	Plant-based	-

Table 12: Ingredients for 1796.24.04 'meroyan'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Kayu sugi*	Leaf	*Salvadora persica*	Plant-based	Antidepressant-like effects when combined with date palm (Youssef et al., 2022)
2.	*Pucuk merah*	*n.m.*	*Syzygium oleana*	Plant-based	-
3.	*Rumput*	*n.m.*	Unspecified	Plant-based	-
4.	*Sena*	Fruit	*Pterocarpus indicus*	Plant-based	-

The ingredients for 'ulah budak di dalam perut' is tabulated in Table 13 The ingredients for 'uri tembuni' is tabulated in Table 14.

Table 13: Ingredients for 1796.26.01 'ulah budak di dalam perut'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Labu*	Seed	*Lagenaria siceraria*	Plant-based	Immune-enhancing adjuvant activity (Wusiman et al., 2022)

Table 14: Ingredients for 1796.27.01 'uri tembuni'

No.	Materia medica	Plant part	Scientific name	Category	Scientific References
1.	*Terung asam*	Leaf	*Solanum lasiocarpum*	Plant-based	-
2.	*Air abu*	-	Charcoal	Mineral-based	-

DISCUSSION

The analysis of Malay medical manuscript MSS 1796 revelead nine illnesses related to women's physical and non physical illness. The diseases are 'meroyan (sakit kulit perut)', 'menyacakkan peranakan', 'rengat peranakan', 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya', 'meroyan'(kancing gigi), 'meroyan', 'ulah budak di dalam perut', 'uri tembuni' and, 'perempuan tiada beranak'. To contextualise the remedies documented in *MSS 1796*, it is essential to elaborate on the Malay disease terms and their corresponding medical interpretations. The manuscript references several conditions related to postpartum and reproductive health, each carrying specific ethnomedical meanings. For example, 'meroyan (sakit kulit perut)' refers to postpartum hives, characterised by itchy, red rashes that may appear after childbirth, even in women without a prior history of allergies, often due to hormonal changes (Thourani, 2022).

The term *'*menyacakkan peranakan*'* describes efforts to reposition the uterus, aligning with the modern understanding of uterine prolapse, which is a condition in which weakened pelvic muscles and ligaments allow the uterus to descend into the vaginal canal, with childbirth being a major risk factor (Johns Hopkins Medicine, n.d.). Similarly, *'*rengat peranakan*'* denotes postpartum cramping associated with uterine involution. These contractions resemble menstrual cramps and are commonly managed using analgesics and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (Deussen et al., 2020). In the manuscript, remedies featuring herbs such as *dedap* and *bonglai* are prescribed for this condition. The phrase *'*rengat atau sakit ari-arinya*'* refers more broadly to lower abdominal pain, which corresponds to dysmenorrhea that is a menstrual cramp that typically affect the lower abdomen and may radiate to the back or thighs (Nagy et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the manuscript also employs *'*meroyan*'* to describe postpartum depression, a serious mental health condition characterised by anxiety and depressive symptoms following childbirth (OASH, 2023). Another term, 'ulah budak di dalam perut', relates to pregnancy-associated complications that may endanger the mother, the baby, or both. Meanwhile, *'*uri*'* and *'*tembuni*'* both denote the placenta, reflecting the manuscript's careful attention to maternal physiology (PRPM, 2017a; PRPM, 2017b).

The manuscript further addresses infertility through the phrase *'*perempuan tiada beranak*'*, indicating a woman's inability to conceive. Notably, this prescription departs from plant-based treatments and incorporates spiritual healing: the recitation of Qur'anic verses (*surah*) into a *mengkawah putih* (a white pot), with the resulting water consumed or used over seven days. This reflects the integration of spiritual belief and therapeutic practice within Malay ethnomedicine, particularly in matters concerning fertility.

Together, these terms highlight the manuscript's sophisticated ethnomedical vocabulary and provide an essential interpretive foundation for analysing the corresponding remedies. Understanding the cultural and medical meanings embedded in these Malay terms allows for a more accurate interpretation of *MSS 1796*, thereby strengthening the discussion on how traditional formulations relate to contemporary biomedical concepts in women's health. The diseases with the highest number of remedies are 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya' and 'meroyan', with four remedies each. Furthermore, the presence of a spiritual remedy highlights the integration of spiritual healing alongside physical treatments, which is the characteristic of traditional medical systems.

Among the most prominent ingredients recorded in the manuscript is *Oryza sativa*, often referred to as *ujung melukut* (tip of the rice husk) or *jerami* (rice straw). Despite being agricultural byproducts, these parts of the rice plant are incorporated into women's health formulations, reflecting a resourceful and holistic approach to healing. Their repeated use in conditions such as 'meroyan*'* *(sakit kulit perut)*, 'menyacakkan peranakan', and 'rengat atau sakit ari-arinya' underscores their therapeutic importance. Modern pharmacological studies have confirmed that *Oryza sativa* possesses significant anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties (Thepthanee et al., 2021), suggesting scientific plausibility behind its traditional application.

Closely following is *Curcuma longa* (*mata kunyit*), which appears in four formulations for similar conditions. Turmeric is widely documented for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, with modern evidence supporting its efficacy in alleviating dysmenorrhea and reducing postpartum pain (Guerrero-Romero et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2020; He et al., 2023; Jayasinghe et al., 2025). Its role in Malay traditional medicine resonates with its use in Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), where turmeric is similarly employed in managing reproductive and postpartum conditions.

Another notable ingredient is *Trachyspermum roxburghianum* (*jintan*), recorded for formulations addressing *meroyan (sakit kulit perut)*. Research has demonstrated its antinociceptive and antioxidant potential (Kalaskar et al., 2024), which may account for its traditional application in alleviating abdominal discomfort after childbirth. Meanwhile, other ingredients such as *Zingiber cassumunar (bonglai)*, *Acorus calamus (Jerangau)*, Salvadora *persica (kayu sugi)*, *Lindernia*

crustacea (kerak nasi), *Lagenaria siceraria (labu)*, and *Blumea balsamifera (telinga kerbau)* appear less frequently but nonetheless carry significant ethnopharmacological value, warranting further study.

The prominence of remedies targeting conditions such as *meroyan* and *rengat peranakan* underscores the strong cultural emphasis on postpartum health in Malay society. The period of confinement ('berpantang') is viewed as crucial to restoring women's bodily balance and preventing long-term illness (Teh et al., 2021). Herbs and plant-based ingredients serve not only as physical remedies but also as symbolic protectors of the female body, believed to realign internal balance, restore vitality, and safeguard fertility (Akbaribazm et al., 2021; Fareez, 2024).

This focus on postpartum care aligns with practices in other traditional medical systems. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the postpartum period is considered a vulnerable "cold" state requiring "warming" foods and herbs, while in Ayurveda, confinement is treated with herbs to restore the uterus, aid lactation, and rejuvenate energy (Ho et al., 2011; Akbaribazm et al., 2021; Patibandla et al., 2024). Thus, Malay formulations share a global ethnomedical recognition of postpartum care as a cornerstone of women's health.

The findings from MSS 1796 have implications beyond cultural preservation. Further studies into the formulations targeting the conditions could inspire the development of complementary therapies or nutraceuticals for women's health, particularly in maternal care where integrative approaches are increasingly valued (Lunze et al., 2015; Schürger et al., 2018). Additionally, given the persistence of maternal health disparities in many regions, these formulations could offer accessible and culturally acceptable alternatives for communities with limited access to conventional medicine (Lunze et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

This study revealed the significance of Malay medical manuscript MSS 1796 in preserving traditional knowledge on women's health documenting eight conditions and fourteen plant based prescriptions. Plants such as *ujung melukut* (*Oryza sativa*), *mata kunyit* (*Curcuma longa*), and *Jintan* (*Trachyspermum roxburghianum*) illustrate both cultural relevance and pharmacological potential, particularly in management of postpartum disorders, uterine prolapse and abdominal pain. The findings highlights the central importance of women's health in Malay medical tradition while revealing opportunities for further scientific validation. By bridging the traditional ethnomedical knowledge with contemporary biomedical insights, this study contributes to the preservation of Malay heritage and the development of integrative approaches to women's health.

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