

Use, Knowledge and Perception of the Natural Remedy “Chörbliwasser”
in the Region of Werdenberg (CH)
A Qualitative Study

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Background The “Chörbliwasser” is a natural folk remedy made from “Chörblichrut” (*Myrrhis odorata*). It contains no alcohol and tastes similar to anise. For at least 100 to 150 years, it has been known in the Swiss regions of Werdenberg (SG) and Emmental (BE), where it is an important part of the local tradition. However, little scientific work exists about this topic despite its regional publicity. Aim of the study is to illustrate the diverse opinions about the “Chörbliwasser” out of the perspective of producers, health professionals and consumers as well as a better understanding of the existing beliefs and attitudes.

Methods A qualitative study was conducted by means of individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with laypeople and health professionals in the mentioned regions. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed synthetically, anonymized and coded applying a thematic analysis.

Results Main themes derived from interviews (n=10) were the “Chörbliwasser” and its properties, use of the “Chörbliwasser”, attitude towards the “Chörbliwasser” and the “Chörbliwasser” and other remedies. Participants described its historical and geographical background and its production. They explained a usage of “Chörbliwasser” across all age groups, different ways of application and numerous reasons of intake, with high blood pressure being the most frequently mentioned reason. They emphasized their mainly positive attitude towards this traditional remedy, its high personal and general significance, including perception in medical domains. Finally, they reflected on comparison of the “Chörbliwasser” to other remedies.

Conclusion This study provides for the first time comprehensive data about the use, knowledge and perception of the “Chörbliwasser” in Werdenberg (SG). Overall, data are superposable with the existing literature, however, some chapters outreach known information. This study adds new information in particular about the different forms of application and its perception among consumers and health professionals. However, further research is needed to better answer questions like its effectiveness in different diseases and how health professionals position themselves on the “Chörbliwasser”.

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