Investigating the use of medicinal plants by orangutans (genus *Pongo* Lacépède, 1799: Hominidae) to combat parasitic infection

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**Materials and methods**

This research is the main part of a postdoctoral study that just began and utilises data and samples that have been gathered by the Orangutan Health Project in Sumatra since 1999. Active plant compounds will be tested on selected parasite cultures, using in vivo and in vitro models. Focus will be on protozoa, in particular *Entamoeba* spp., *Giardia* spp., *Cryptosporidium* spp. and microsporidia which have been previously identified in orangutan faecal samples. Molecular techniques will also be used to identify *Entamoeba* spp. to species level and genotyping of the *Cryptosporidium* species will be carried out.

**Expected applications of findings**

It is anticipated that identifying antiparasitic plants utilised by orangutans will:

1. Improve the knowledge of plant species required by wild and captive orangutans
2. Aid in teaching possibly reintroduced orangutans to utilise these plants, reducing their parasite levels in their new environments
3. Possibly identify plant compounds with pharmaceutical medicinal purposes for humans

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