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Microbial assessment of some medicinal herbs sold in Makkah, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: Forty samples of ten of the most commonly sold medicinal herbs, either packed or unpacked, collected from herbal stores located in different areas in Makkah, Saudi Arabia during Hajj season 1435H\2014 for microbial assessment. The average of total aerobic colony, *Enterobacteriaceae* and mold and yeast counts were 600/g and 9500/g in packed *Olea europaea* and *Melissa officinalis* and 900/g and 5000/g in unpacked *Matricaria chamomila* and *Origanum majorana*, 1000/g and 6600/g in packed *Cassia acutifolia*and *Melissa officinalis* and 180/g and 3400/g in unpacked *Trachyspermum copticum* and *Thymus vulgaris*, 1200/g and 7700/g in packed *Salvia officinalis* and 500/g and 3400/g in unpacked *Origanum majorana*, respectively. Some microorganisms of public health impact such as *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli* were isolated from some samples, in addition to several molds which were also identified. Results were discussed and compared with international microbial quality standards of medicinal herbs.

Key words : Assessment, Microbial contamination, Medicinal herbs, Standards.

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