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Universal themes and motifs of healing in Javanese medical manuscripts: From regional literature to world literature

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Abstract: *Javanese medical manuscripts preserve local healing knowledge, yet their literary representations of illness and recovery remain insufficiently explored. This study identifies recurring healing themes and motifs and examines their relevance to comparative and world literature. Using a qualitative design, it analyzes twelve dental treatment records across five manuscripts through modern philological methods and comparative literary analysis, supported by ethnomedicinal and pharmacological literature. The findings reveal five motifs: medicinal plants, animal-derived remedies, material transformation, compound preparations, and fermented ingredients. These motifs develop three broader themes: human relationships with nature, healing as bodily restoration, and the transmission of local knowledge. Comparisons with other healing traditions suggest shared responses to suffering and bodily vulnerability, alongside differences in ingredients, procedures, and cultural meanings. Pharmacological literature indicates potential relevance to dental care for several plant ingredients, although some animal-derived remedies lack supporting evidence. The study concludes that these manuscripts function as both repositories of traditional medical knowledge and cultural literary texts. Their universal significance lies in shared human experiences of illness and healing, enabling culturally specific Javanese knowledge to contribute to world literary discussions.*

Keywords: *Javanese medical manuscripts, universal themes, universal motifs, comparative literature, ethnomedicine, medical humanities.*

INTRODUCTION

Each tradition offers a unique understanding of disease, the body, ingredients, and healing methods. Therefore, traditional medicine is not simply a collection of concoctions or illness-treating techniques. It is knowledge generated by a group of people about the body, nature, health, and medicine, rooted in their culture. The cultural dimension of traditional medicine is gaining renewed attention as studies integrate local knowledge with evidence-based practices. The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034, for example, emphasizes not only the need to strengthen scientific evidence for traditional medicine but also the importance of respecting local heritage, cultural diversity, indigenous knowledge, and biodiversity (World Health Organization, 2025). Such an approach is in line with several studies in the field of culture-based health and medical humanities which argue that illness and healing cannot be understood solely as biological phenomena because both are also shaped by cultural values, social practices, meanings, and representations (Engebretsen et al., 2020; Kristeva et al., 2018; Napier et al., 2014).

One important source of this knowledge is ancient medical manuscripts. Traditional medical manuscripts not only describe diseases and their treatments but also offer a historical understanding of the relationship between humans and their

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environment. Manuscripts such as the Serat Primbon Jampi Jawi document diseases, ingredients, preparation techniques, dosages, and preparation methods, showing that traditional Javanese medicine developed through a structured knowledge system passed down from generation to generation (Makmun et al., 2014; Mulyani et al., 2017; Wulandari, 2019). These manuscripts serve as a treasure trove of knowledge about the body, diseases, and healing practices, recorded by previous generations and then passed on to subsequent generations.

Previous studies have significantly helped uncover and clarify this knowledge. Philological research has made Javanese medical texts more accessible by inventorying, describing, transliterating, editing, translating, and interpreting them. A study of the Serat Primbon Jampi Jawi, for example, has identified various medicinal ingredients derived from roots, rhizomes, bark, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, and other materials, along with various processing techniques such as burning, steaming, boiling, grinding, soaking, and chewing (Mulyani et al., 2016, 2017). Other studies have further explored this by examining the use of trasiniolan for more specific ailments, namely skin diseases. Sinungharjo et al. (2023) examined the lexicon of traditional medicinal dosage systems in the Serat Primbon Reracikan Jampi Jawi. They showed that dosage systems reflect knowledge acquired from culture and everyday experience.

However, previous studies have generally treated manuscripts as documents containing medical knowledge rather than cultural products that represent ideas about healing. Therefore, previous research has tended to ask what materials appear in the manuscripts, how they were prepared, and what ailments these medicines were thought to cure. These questions remain important, but they do not fully explain how ancient societies, in this study, Javanese society, conceptualized illness and healing. In the manuscripts, the human body is often associated with natural elements such as plants, animals, temperature, and healing processes. This suggests a distinctive cultural mindset. This study fills that gap. While Javanese medical manuscripts have received considerable attention in philology, ethnomedicine, and pharmacology, scholars have rarely discussed their literary aspects or their significance as representations of healing themes and motifs.

Examining the manuscript from this perspective shifts the focus and question from "what medicine is prescribed?" to "how is the healing process depicted?" From this perspective, the materials and procedures are seen not merely as practical instructions for treatment but as patterns that may be intentionally repeated. The use of plants, animals, processed materials, and concoctions, along with preparation methods such as burning, heating, fermenting, and pounding, can be interpreted as healing motifs. In this study, motif operationally refers to a concrete, recurring element or pattern related to the healing process. In contrast, theme refers to the broader main idea developed from this series of motifs. This study draws on Thompson's (1955) method of analyzing folktales by identifying recurring patterns and then applying those patterns to traditional healing manuscripts. Through the repeatedly repeated materials and treatment methods, one can understand the outlook and philosophy of past societies, such as maintaining bodily balance and returning to nature.

This perspective also allows comparisons between Javanese healing traditions and those of other cultures. Other traditions may also use certain plants, animal materials, and processes. However, these similarities do not necessarily mean that one

tradition imitates another or shares the same meaning. Similar healing motifs can carry different philosophical meanings, depending on a community's beliefs, natural environment, and local knowledge. This comparison helps us understand the unique ways people seek healing within each culture. This approach also links the study of ancient healing texts to world literature. Today, world literature is no longer limited to popular Western works. Local texts can also emerge and interact globally. As Moretti (2000) and Damrosch (2003) argue, world literature thrives on cultural diversity and on how a work acquires new meaning when read by other communities. This means local texts do not need to lose their cultural identity to gain global recognition. Instead, their uniqueness and local wisdom become key assets for international comparison and understanding.

Through the healing motif, this local manuscript conveys universal human experiences, such as physical suffering, dependence on nature, and the quest for health restoration. The shift from regional to world literature is not hierarchical, but an expansion of perspective: local texts can engage in global dialogue when readers read their cultural specificities comparatively. This study fills this academic gap by positioning Javanese medical manuscripts as both sources of traditional medicinal knowledge and cultural-literary texts. It examines how recurring healing patterns shape major motifs and themes concerning the relationship between humans and nature, the restoration of balance, and the sustainability of local knowledge. Using comparative literary, ethnomedicinal, and modern pharmacological approaches, this study aims to uncover universal healing motifs in Javanese manuscripts. This research aims to clarify the cultural meanings of each material, process, and practice found. Javanese medical manuscripts are not simply objects of study in philology or traditional medicine, but cultural texts that actively shape global discussions of the human healing experience.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design to examine healing as both cultural knowledge and literary representation in Javanese medical texts. It combines modern philology and comparative literature, supported by modern ethnomedicine and pharmacology. Modern philology establishes reliable textual data, while comparative literature provides the primary framework for identifying recurring healing motifs and interpreting their broader cultural meanings.

We collected primary data from selected medical manuscripts. These manuscripts are in Classical Javanese, written in Javanese script, and housed in the Sanabudaya Museum in Yogyakarta, the National Library in Jakarta, and the Radya Pustaka Museum in Surakarta. We selected these manuscripts because they contain substantial information on diseases, medicinal ingredients, preparation techniques, usage methods, and therapeutic practices. The philological procedures included manuscript inventory, base-text selection, codicological description, standard transliteration, semantic translation, and textual exploration. Table 1 lists the five manuscripts examined in this study.

Table 1. Javanese medical manuscripts included in the study

No.	Manuscript Title	Storage Location	Code
1	Boekoe Primbon Djampi Djawi	Sanabudaya Museum, Yogyakarta Manuscript Section	SK. 143b
2	Serat Primbon	Sanabudaya Museum, Yogyakarta Manuscript Section	PBE. 35
3	Buku Jampi	Sanabudaya Museum, Yogyakarta Manuscript Section	LI. 5
4	Kitab Tibb	National Library	W227
5	Serat Primbon Mangkuprajan	Radya Pustaka Museum, Surakarta	RP237

We analyzed the data in three stages. First, we identified and grouped healing-related textual units into recurring motifs, such as the use of medicinal plants, animal-derived materials, processed materials, fermentation, and processing through burning or other methods. Second, we interpreted these motifs to identify broader themes, particularly the relationship between humans and nature, the restoration of bodily and existential balance, and the continuity of local knowledge. Third, we examined these themes and motifs comparatively by relating them to documented healing traditions in other cultural contexts. Ethnomedicinal literature clarified cultural meanings, while pharmacological studies contextualized the potential benefits or risks of medicinal ingredients. We treated similarities between traditions as cultural congruence rather than evidence of direct historical relationships, unless additional evidence supported them. Because this study relies on textual representations, its findings reflect the cultural and literary meanings of healing, not the clinical effectiveness of the medicines described in the texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The manuscript includes at least twelve treatment notes on toothache, cavities, dead teeth, brittle or loose teeth, and tooth strengthening. The concoctions used vary from single ingredients to complex formulations with multiple components. Processing and use techniques also vary, including burning, heating, drying, pounding, applying, inserting into the tooth, and drinking as a herbal drink. Table 2 summarizes the twelve treatment records.

Table 2. Dental conditions, ingredients, and preparation and application methods recorded in the manuscripts

No.	Condition	The main ingredient	Processing
1	Toothache	Deer skin	Burnt
2	Toothache	Dlingo and coconut oil	Heated then applied while warm
3	Toothache	Nutmeg slime	Apply directly
4	Dead tooth	Burnt shrimp paste	Attached or inserted on the teeth
5	Strengthen teeth	Sperm of a mating rooster	Rubbed on teeth
6	Dental treatment	Chinese castor oil	smeared
7	Cavity	Chinese castor and betel leaves	smeared
8	Toothache	The lower beak of a woodpecker	Placed under the teeth
9	Loose/brittle teeth	Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, galangal, key lime, ginger, sesame oil, honey, and other ingredients	Made as a warm medicine
10	Strengthen teeth	Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, and other ingredients	Prepared as a compound potion
11	Toothache	Various plant stems, cold rice, mistletoe, and other ingredients	Dried in the sun, burned to ashes, crushed, then applied between the teeth
12	Strengthening loose teeth	Javanese chilies, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, laos, keys, ginger, sesame oil and honey	Processed into herbal medicine and drunk before eating

The first eight data points show that the dominant preparation or treatment methods are smearing, rubbing, inserting, or placing directly on the affected tooth. Conversely, treatments for brittle or loose teeth tend to use more complex concoctions. One concoction combines Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, mace, cardamom, galangal, key lime, ginger, kemlaka wood, sidawayah flowers, sesame oil, and honey. This pattern suggests that some concoctions are prepared more simply. In contrast, others require more complex formulations and take more time to prepare.

A pharmacological review revealed varying degrees of scientific relevance among the ingredients listed in the manuscript. Of the seventeen ingredients studied, most demonstrated pharmacological activity theoretically related to pain, inflammation, infection, or oral health. However, ingredients such as deer hide, rooster semen, and woodpecker beak showed no scientific evidence supporting their use in dental care. Table 3 presents the reported activities and potential dental relevance of selected ingredients.

Table 3. Reported pharmacological activities and potential dental relevance of selected ingredients

Material	Main activities	Relevance to dental health
Dlingo (*Acorus calamus)*	Analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant	Potentially reduces pain, inflammation, and oral microorganisms (Bari et al., 2025; Middha et al., 2026)
Coconut oil	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antibacterial, antioxidant	Potentially reduces oral bacteria and inflammation (Koh et al., 2022; Zeng et al., 2024)
Nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans)*	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, analgesic	Potentially helps reduce tooth pain and inflammation (Chatchanok Nukulkit et al., 2025; Elfia & Susilo, 2023)
Chinese castor oil plant (*Jatropha multifida*)	Antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, wound healing, hemostatic	Potentially relevant, but still requires clinical evidence (Tripathi et al., 2023)
Chew of betel	Antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, analgesic	Potentially beneficial, but long-term use has oral health risks
Javanese chili	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant	Potentially helps reduce pain and inflammation (Jadid et al., 2017; Pramitha et al., 2025)
Clove	Antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant	Relevant for toothache, inflammation, and oral infections (Devkota & Adhikari-Devkota, 2020; Pandey et al., 2024)
Cinnamon	Antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant	Potential to suppress oral bacteria and inflammation (Djarot et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023)
Cardamom	Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant	Potentially reduces infection, pain, and swelling (Prasannan et al., 2021)
Laos/galangal	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antibacterial	Theoretically useful for infections and inflammation (E. Mohiuudin, 2011; Kambar et al., 2014)
Key (*Boesenbergia rotunda)*	Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antioxidant, wound healing	Potentially reduces pain, inflammation, and infection (Voon et al., 2017)
Ginger	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant, antibacterial	Potentially reduces toothache, inflammation, and oral infections

Plant-based ingredients are a group of ingredients with pharmacological relevance. Dlingo, coconut oil, nutmeg, castor oil, Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, galangal, key lime, and ginger have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, or antioxidant activities. Cloves show the strongest link to dental problems because of their combined analgesic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activities. However, not all ingredients can be evaluated equally. For example, betel nut has antibacterial and analgesic potential, but long-term use is associated with oral health risks. Similarly, the benefits of castor oil are still potential and require further clinical evidence.

The manuscripts contain five recurring healing motifs: medicinal plants, animals as therapeutic media, transformation or processing of materials, processed materials, and fermented materials. Table 4 provides examples of how these motifs appear in the manuscripts.

Table 4. Recurring healing motifs and their manifestations in Javanese medical manuscripts

Motive	Form oof emergence	Example
Medicinal plants	The use of plants or parts of plants as therapeutic agents	Dlingo, coconut, nutmeg, Chinese distance, Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, ginger
Animals as therapeutic media	Body parts or substances from animals are used in medicine	Deer skin, rooster sperm, woodpecker beak
Transformation/processing of materials	Ingredients are modified before use as medicine	Burned, heated, dried in the sun, pounded, burned
Processed herbs	Several ingredients are combined in one formula	A mixture of Javanese chilies, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, laos, ginger, oil and honey
Fermented ingredients	Fermented products are used as a healing medium	shrimp paste

Plant motifs are the most prominent, encompassing spices, leaves, sap, fruit, rhizomes, oils, and other plant-derived products. Animal motifs are less frequent but still appear in deer hide, rooster semen, and woodpecker beaks. The transformation or processing of materials is also evident, as they are not always used in raw form but are fired, heated, dried, ground, or mixed. Furthermore, concoctions intended to strengthen teeth exhibit mixed herb motifs, while shrimp paste (shrimp paste) represents the use of fermented materials.

These motifs repeat in three broader themes: the relationship between humans and nature, healing as restoration, and the preservation of local knowledge. The first theme is reflected in the predominance of materials derived from plants, animals, and other natural resources. Nature serves not only as a backdrop for human life but also as a therapeutic resource for addressing physical disorders.

The second theme is healing as restoration. The texts discuss not only relieving toothache but also strengthening loose or fragile teeth, treating cavities, and maintaining dental health. Therefore, healing is depicted as a process of restoring bodily function, not simply alleviating symptoms.

The third theme is preserving and disseminating local knowledge. The manuscripts record not only ingredients but also measurements, preparation sequences, methods of use, and treatment times. These details suggest that the manuscripts served as written media for preserving and passing on practical healing knowledge from generation to generation. Overall, these findings show that Javanese medicinal manuscripts do more than list traditional concoctions. They depict recurring healing patterns through relationships with nature, material processing, formulation, and the preservation of culturally embedded knowledge.

Discussion

Healing as a Relationship between Humans, Nature, and Body Balance

Traditional medicine systems across cultures generally understand healing as a relationship among the body, the environment, and the restoration of balance. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes traditional medicine as a knowledge system rooted in history and culture, often using nature-based remedies and holistic approaches to restore balance among body, mind, and environment. Its current global

strategy also places traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and culturally respectful health practices within a broader discussion of human well-being (World Health Organization, 2025). Similar ideas emerge in established Asian medicine systems. In Ayurveda, for example, disease and treatment closely relate to disrupting and restoring balance, and natural ingredients and herbal mixtures support this restoration (Parasuraman et al., 2014). Comparative studies of Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine also show that both systems interpret health through the relationship between the body's condition, environmental factors, and broader principles of balance. However, their conceptual categories differ significantly (Patwardhan et al., 2005).

The dental remedies summarized in Table 2 reveal a similar orientation in Javanese medical texts, though they use locally distinctive materials and procedures. Treatments for dental problems rely heavily on locally sourced ingredients, including dlingo (a type of Javanese sorghum), coconut oil, nutmeg, castor bean (jatropha), pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, galangal, ginger, honey, and animal-derived ingredients. Furthermore, these texts focus on more than direct pain relief. They also include concoctions intended to strengthen loose or brittle teeth and restore their condition. This suggests that healing was viewed not simply as symptomatic relief, but as an effort to restore the body to a state considered functional and stable.

This finding matters because it shifts attention from questions about medicinal ingredients to the cultural values that shape their use. The recurring pattern of bodily disturbance to recovery suggests that healing in Javanese manuscripts is constructed as a process of restoring bodily function by utilizing resources available in the environment. This does not mean that Javanese manuscripts share a theory of balance with Ayurveda or Chinese medicine. The similarity lies in a broader pattern: people respond to a disturbed body through interaction with natural substances to restore the desired bodily state. This reading aligns with the medical humanities perspective, which views the body as a biocultural phenomenon in which the experience of illness and healing cannot be fully separated from culture, material practices, and systems of meaning (Kristeva et al., 2018). Thus, the universal aspect of this finding lies not in shared therapeutic theories, but in the human issues faced and the patterns of response to them. Pain, bodily damage, and the need to restore function are broad human experiences, while the materials, procedures, and ways of interpreting them remain local. Javanese distinctiveness is evident in the choice of materials, preparation methods, and practices of use.

Cross-Cultural Healing Motifs

Table 4 summarizes five recurring healing motifs in Javanese medical manuscripts: the use of medicinal plants, animals as therapeutic media, processing or transformation of materials, processed concoctions, and fermented materials. Among these five motifs, plants are the most dominant. People use various spices, leaves, sap, fruit, rhizomes, oils, and honey, either alone or combined with other ingredients.

The use of various herbs is particularly evident in treatments to strengthen weak or lose teeth. One concoction, for example, combines Javanese chili, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, galangal, key lime, ginger, sesame oil, honey, and several other ingredients. This pattern suggests that healing does not always depend on a single ingredient but can be built through combinations of complementary ingredients. This

practice also appears in other traditional healing systems, including Ayurveda and other Asian medicines that use complex formulas.

Manuscripts also record the use of animal-derived materials, such as deer skin, rooster sperm, and woodpecker beaks. The use of animals in medicine appears not only in Javanese traditions but also in various cultures through a practice often called *zootherapy*. Alves dan Alves (2011), for example, document the diversity of animal materials in Latin American traditional medicine. This similarity points to a broader pattern: the human tendency to utilize natural resources, both plants and animals, to treat disease. However, this similarity does not mean that all materials have the same properties or originate from the same tradition.

Another strong motive is transforming or processing ingredients. People do not always use medicinal ingredients raw; they often burn, heat, dry, grind, or mix them first. For example, they burn deer skin, heat dlingo and coconut oil, and burn several other ingredients to ash before use. In their study of Chinese medicine, Wu et al. (2018) demonstrated that processing ingredients can alter their chemical composition, solubility, biological activity, and toxicity. This demonstrates that in Javanese medical knowledge, processing is a crucial part of healing. Certain ingredients must be transformed before they can be used as medicine.

Thus, what is universal in these motifs is not the exact similarity of the materials or the treatment methods. More universal is the human pattern of seeking healing through nature, processing materials, combining them, and assigning therapeutic functions to the objects around them. The concrete forms remain distinct across societies, shaped by each society's environment and culture.

Between Traditional Knowledge and Pharmacological Relevance

Table 3 summarizes the reported pharmacological activities of selected ingredients in the manuscripts and their potential relevance to dental health. For example, dlingo, coconut oil, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, galangal, key lime, and ginger are known to have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, or antioxidant activities. These findings suggest that some knowledge preserved in the manuscripts may have an empirical basis that modern science can explain.

Cloves are an obvious example. Their analgesic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties may explain their use for dental problems. However, not all ingredients show the same pattern. For example, the reviewed data found no scientific evidence supporting their use as dental remedies.

This distinction matters because it shows that modern medical standards cannot readily divide the manuscripts' contents into truth and falsity. Some materials may have pharmacologically explicable properties, others require further research, and others are more valuable as historical and cultural evidence.

Betel nut is a clear example. On the one hand, the ingredients used in betel chewing have antibacterial and anti-inflammatory potential. On the other hand, long-term use is also associated with risks to oral health. Therefore, the presence of an ingredient in a manuscript does not necessarily mean current medical standards consider its use safe or effective.

Therefore, this research uses pharmacological studies not to validate all traditional recipes, but to assess how traditional knowledge intersects with modern

scientific knowledge. In this way, the manuscripts can be read both as sources of knowledge about healing practices and as cultural documents that record how Javanese people understand illness and healing.

Preserving Local Knowledge: From Regional Literature to World Literature

Javanese medical manuscripts also demonstrate their important role as repositories of knowledge. They record not only medicinal ingredients, but also dosages, selection methods, processing methods, usage instructions, and even the timing of concoctions. For example, one recipe for strengthening loose teeth details the ingredients, preparation method, and timing of use.

This kind of record-keeping allowed knowledge about medicine to pass from one generation to the next. It stored experiences with the materials used, how to process them, and how to treat illnesses not only in individual memories but also in text. Manuscripts thus became a means of preserving local knowledge.

However, the manuscript can also be read more broadly as a cultural text. It addresses issues familiar to the general human experience: pain, the fragile body, the desire for healing, human dependence on nature, and the effort to pass on knowledge to the next generation. These themes allow readers to compare the Javanese manuscript with healing traditions from other cultures.

In the context of world literature, this matters because a text does not have to lose its local identity to be read more widely. Damrosch (2003) explains that world literature can be understood as works that acquire new meaning when read outside their cultural context of origin. Thus, Javanese medical manuscripts can enter broader conversations precisely because they convey uniquely Javanese experiences and knowledge.

Motifs of plants, animals, compound potions, fermentation, and material processing provide points of comparison with other traditions. However, comparison does not show that all cultures have the same medical systems. Rather, comparison shows how different cultures address similar human problems.

Thus, the journey from regional literature to world literature need not be understood as a shift from local works to works of greater value. What has changed is the reading space. Manuscripts that were originally understood primarily as sources of traditional Javanese medicine can be read more broadly as texts that discuss the body, nature, illness, healing, and the transmission of knowledge. In this view, Javanese medical manuscripts have three values simultaneously: as sources of traditional medical knowledge, as cultural texts representing healing themes and motifs, and as comparative literary materials that enable dialogue between local Javanese experience and the broader human experience.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Javanese medical manuscripts not only list ingredients and treatments but also reflect how the community understood the relationship between the body, nature, disease, and healing. The most prominent motifs include plants, animals, fermented materials, transformed materials, and compound concoctions. Some ingredients, such as cloves, ginger, nutmeg, coconut oil, and several other spices, show pharmacological activities with analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, or antioxidant effects. In contrast, others, such as deer skin, rooster

sperm, and woodpecker beaks, lack comparable scientific support. These findings emphasize that Javanese medical manuscripts should be read as both sources of traditional knowledge and cultural texts. More broadly, their universality lies not in similar ingredients or treatment techniques, but in the human experience of illness, using nature, processing materials, and seeking healing.

Theoretically, this study expands Javanese medical manuscripts from objects of philology and ethnomedicine to cultural texts that comparative literature, the medical humanities, and world literature can read. Practically, these findings underscore the importance of documenting, transliterating, translating, and critically reassessing traditional medical knowledge. This research is still limited to textual representation and literature-based pharmacological studies, so it cannot explain the clinical effectiveness of the recorded herbs. Therefore, further research can expand the manuscript corpus, compare it with other healing traditions, and develop interdisciplinary studies involving philology, comparative literature, ethnomedicine, pharmacy, and dentistry.

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