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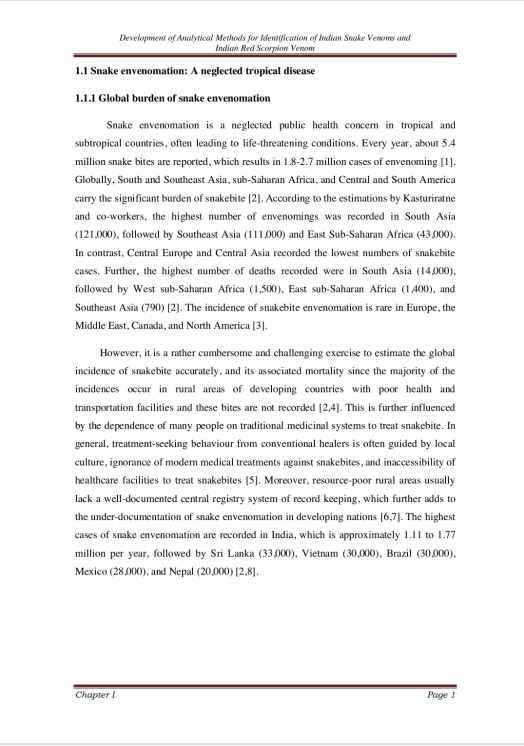

Development of Analytical Methods for Identification of Indian Snake Venoms and Indian Red Scorpion Venom

1.1 Snake envenomation: A neglected tropical disease

1.1.1 Global burden of snake envenomation

Snake envenomation is a neglected public health concern in tropical and subtropical countries, often leading to life-threatening conditions. Every year, about 5.4 million snake bites are reported, which results in 1.8-2.7 million cases of envenoming [1]. Globally, South and Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and South America carry the significant burden of snakebite [2]. According to the estimations by Kasturiratne and co-workers, the highest number of envenomings was recorded in South Asia (121,000), followed by Southeast Asia (111,000) and East Sub-Saharan Africa (43,000). In contrast, Central Europe and Central Asia recorded the lowest numbers of snakebite cases. Further, the highest number of deaths recorded were in South Asia (14,000), followed by West sub-Saharan Africa (1,500), East sub-Saharan Africa (1,400), and Southeast Asia (790) [2]. The incidence of snakebite envenomation is rare in Europe, the Middle East, Canada, and North America [3].

However, it is a rather cumbersome and challenging exercise to estimate the global incidence of snakebite accurately, and its associated mortality since the majority of the incidences occur in rural areas of developing countries with poor health and transportation facilities and these bites are not recorded [2,4]. This is further influenced by the dependence of many people on traditional medicinal systems to treat snakebite. In general, treatment-seeking behaviour from conventional healers is often guided by local culture, ignorance of modern medical treatments against snakebites, and inaccessibility of healthcare facilities to treat snakebites [5]. Moreover, resource-poor rural areas usually lack a well-documented central registry system of record keeping, which further adds to the under-documentation of snake envenomation in developing nations [6,7]. The highest cases of snake envenomation are recorded in India, which is approximately 1.11 to 1.77 million per year, followed by Sri Lanka (33,000), Vietnam (30,000), Brazil (30,000), Mexico (28,000), and Nepal (20,000) [2,8].

Chapter 1 *Page 1*

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by Upasana Puzari

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