



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Fertility and fontanel : women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive health and childcare in western Africa

Towns, A.M.

Citation

Towns, A. M. (2014, September 30). *Fertility and fontanel : women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive health and childcare in western Africa*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28942>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/28942>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/28942> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Towns, Alexandra Maria

Title: Fertility and fontanel : women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive health and childcare in western Africa

Issue Date: 2014-09-30

Fertility and Fontanel:
Women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive
health and childcare in western Africa

Alexandra Maria Towns

Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Sector Botany
Leiden University
2014

Towns, A.M.

Fertility and Fontanel: Women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive health and childcare in western Africa

ISBN: 978-90-9028493-4

NUR: 941

Graphic design & layout: Alexandra M. Towns

Cover photograph: Beninese woman by Sofie Ruysschaert

Back cover photograph: Gabonese child by Alexandra M. Towns

Printing: CPI-Koninklijke Wöhrmann

This book is printed on FSC certified paper

Chapter 2: Published in Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine 10:42 (2014). Towns, A.M., Ruysschaert S., van Vliet E., and van Andel T., Evidence in support of the role of disturbance vegetation for women's health and childcare in Western Africa.

Chapter 3: Published in BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine 14: 113 (2014). Towns, A.M. and van Andel, T., Comparing local perspectives on women's health with statistics on maternal mortality: an ethnobotanical study in Bénin and Gabon.

Chapter 4: Published in PLoS ONE 9(8): e105972 (2014). Towns, A.M., Eyi, S.M. and van Andel, T., Traditional medicine and child care in Western Africa: mothers' knowledge, folk illnesses, and patterns of healthcare-seeking behavior.

Chapter 5: Published in Journal of Ethnopharmacology 155: 1184-1193 (2014). Towns, A.M., Quiroz, D., Guinee, G., de Boer, H., and van Andel T., Volume, value and floristic diversity of Gabon's medicinal plant markets.

Remainder of the thesis Copyright 2014, Leiden University and Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Sector Botany, Leiden, the Netherlands.

The layout of separate chapters may differ from the layout used in the original publication.

No part of this publication, apart from bibliographic data and brief annotations in critical reviews, may be reproduced re-recorded or published in any form, including print, photocopy, microfilm, electronic or electromagnetic record without written permission from the author.

Fertility and Fontanel:
Women's knowledge of medicinal plants for reproductive
health and childcare in western Africa

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 30 september 2014
klokke 13:45 uur

door

Alexandra Maria Towns
Geboren te Watertown, New York, United States of America
in 1983

Promotiecommissie

Promotor: Prof. dr. E.F. Smets

Co-promotor: Dr. T.R. van Andel

Overige leden:

Prof. dr. J.C. Biesmeijer (Naturalis Biodiversity Center & Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Dr. H.J. de Boer (Naturalis Biodiversity Center & Uppsala University)

Prof. dr. A.J. Dietz (Universiteit Leiden & Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Prof. dr. R. Reis (Universiteit Leiden [LUMC] & Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Prof. dr. M.S.M. Sosef (Botanic Garden Meise & Wageningen Universiteit)

Prof. dr. C.J. ten Cate

Dr. I. Vandebroek (New York Botanical Garden)

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Evidence in support of the role of disturbance vegetation for women's health and childcare in western Africa	7
Chapter 3	Comparing local perspectives on women's health with statistics on maternal mortality: an ethnobotanical study in Bénin and Gabon	19
Chapter 4	Traditional medicine and childcare in western Africa: mothers' knowledge, folk illnesses, and patterns of healthcare-seeking behavior	47
Chapter 5	Volume, value and floristic diversity of Gabon's medicinal plant markets	77
Chapter 6	Summary and Conclusions	119
	Samenvatting & Conclusies (Dutch summary)	125
	References	129
	Curriculum Vitae	143
	List of Publications	144
	Acknowledgements	145

