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Chimpanzees use medicinal plants when sick – 24th June 2024

Level 4

Humans have used plants as medicine since prehistory. Scientists have now found that chimpanzees use plants to heal themselves. Researchers conducted a study of chimpanzee behaviour in a forest in Uganda. The researchers observed a male chimp with an injured hand looking for a fern. The fern may have reduced the swelling in its hand. Another chimp with an infection ate the bark of a tree. This may have helped to cure the animal.

The researchers say there is a correlation between the chimpanzees' ills and the healing properties in plants. The researchers tested the plants the chimpanzees ate. They found that 88 per cent of them had anti-bacterial properties. A researcher said: "Results suggest that Budongo chimpanzees consume several [plants] with potent medicinal properties." She said the research may lead to a greater use of medicinal plants in our lives.

Level 5

Humans have used plants for medicine since prehistoric times. They are still used in traditional medicine. Scientists have now found that chimpanzees also seek out plants to heal themselves. Researchers in the UK conducted a study of chimpanzee behaviour in the Budongo Central Forest in Uganda. The researchers tracked a male chimp with an injured hand looking for a fern. The fern may have reduced the swelling in the ape's hand. Another chimpanzee with an infection ate the bark of a cat-thorn tree. This may have helped to reduce the animal's sickness.

The researchers say there is a strong correlation between the chimpanzees' ailments and the healing properties in plants. The researchers tested plants that chimpanzees didn't normally eat. They found that 88 per cent of the plants contained anti-bacterial properties, while 33 per cent were anti-inflammatory. A researcher said: "Pharmacological results suggest that Budongo chimpanzees consume several species with potent medicinal properties." She said the investigations into the primates' may pave the way for a greater use of natural remedies in our lives.

Level 6

Humans have been using medicinal plants since prehistoric times. They are still used around the world in traditional medicine. For the first time, scientists have discovered that chimpanzees also seek out the fruits of the forest to heal themselves when sick. Researchers from Oxford University in the UK conducted a study of chimpanzee behaviour at the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda. The researchers tracked a male chimp with an injured hand looking for the leaves of a fern. The fern had properties that may have reduced the swelling in the ape's hand. Another chimpanzee with a parasitic infection sought out the bark of a cat-thorn tree. This may have helped to alleviate the animal's condition.

The research team said there was a strong correlation between the chimpanzees' ailments and injuries and the healing properties in the flora they consumed. The researchers tested plant extracts that were not a normal part of a chimpanzee's diet. They found that 88 per cent of the extracts contained anti-bacterial properties, while 33 per cent of them had anti-inflammatory qualities. Researcher and anthropologist Dr Elodie Freymann said: "Pharmacological results suggest that Budongo chimpanzees consume several species with potent medicinal properties." She said her team's investigations into the primates' behaviour may pave the way for a greater use of natural remedies in our lives.