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### **MEDITERRANEAN TRADITIONAL INFUSIONS AS A VALUABLE SOURCE OF BIOACTIVE COMPOUNDS**

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Herbal infusions are commonly consumed in the traditional Mediterranean diet. Some examples of these are mountain tea, lemon balm, and sage which are valuable sources of bioactive compounds. Mountain tea is recommended as a traditional medicine for the relief of mild gastrointestinal disorders and against the common cold. Many studies have unveiled its benefits on human health which are attributed mainly to their rich content of polyphenols. Lemon balm is considered a traditional herbal medicinal product for the relief of mild symptoms of mental stress and to aid sleep, as well as for the symptomatic treatment of mild gastrointestinal complaints including bloating and flatulence. The presence of a wide range of chemical constituents (such as triterpenoids and polyphenols) has been reported to be responsible for its pharmacological effects. Sage infusions as traditional herbal medicines are used for addressing mouth and throat disorders, skin disorders, minor wounds, and gastrointestinal ailments. Their rich phytochemical content, including flavonoids, depsides, and phenolic acids could be responsible for the reported broad range of pharmacological properties such as antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities. Observational epidemiological studies support the benefits of the Mediterranean dietary pattern to increase life expectancy, reduce the risk of major chronic disease, and improve quality of life and well-being. As part of the Mediterranean diet, representing the gold standard in preventive medicine, probably due to the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of the consumed herbal products, the present study aimed to explore the phytochemical content and the bioactive compounds of mountain tea, lemon balm, and sage.

*Keywords: Mediterranean diet; mountain tea; lemon balm; sage*