THE USE OF MEDICINAL PLANTS AND/OR PHYTOTHERAPY IN PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS AND POPULATION SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMICAL PROFILE IN NORTHEAST CACAO REGION OF BRAZIL

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Keywords: public health; medicinal plants

Introduction: Despite the government medicine politics, the use of alternative therapies is a reality in several layers of the Brazilian society (SILVA, R. B. F., 455, 2006). Commercial accessibility and belief their safety are the major causes (VEIGA JUNIOR, Q. N., 28, 519, 2008). Thus, the study aimed to study the sociodemographic profile of patients from public health units in south region of Bahia and the usage of plant derived products by this population.

Experimental section: The usage of medicinal plants and phytotherapeutic formulas, and sociodemographic data (age, gender, education level, and family income) were investigated through questionnaires.

Results: The predominant age group ranged from 40 to 59 anos, being 81.6% (n=107/131) women. The prevailed family income was less than one minimum wage. The education level varied between towns and subjects from the same health unit. In Ilhéus, it was observed a low education levels, being 35.29% (n=12/34) subjects with uncompleted elementary school grade. In Itabuna prevailed average education level with 39.17% (n=38/97) of subjects with high school grade. In relation to plant based products usage, it was observed that 89% (n=87/97) of individuals make usage of this resource in Itabuna and 70% (n=24/34) in Ilhéus.

Discussion/Conclusion: The study about economic, social, and cultural profile of health assistance units public in Cacao region of Bahia, Brazil demonstrated that the most part of patients has low familiar income, but a medium education level. From the population study, the majority was women and declared to be plant derived products consumer. Despite the small number of subjects, this study shows a population profile peculiar of southern Bahia Cacao region where there is disordered development, with non planned growing urbanization associated to high poverty index (SILVA, PPG, 2012). All of those aspects may take to irrational use of alternative therapies.