Using methods and risk of the use of medicinal plants by users of the public health system in the city of Ijuí/RS

C. S. BAIOTTO¹, C. F. COLET¹, G.T. D. MOLIN¹, A. W. CAVINATTO¹, K.R. OLIVEIRA¹

¹ UNIJUÍ – Universidade Regional do Noroeste do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul

Keywords: popular knowledge, medicinal plants, public health system, utilization.

Introduction: A growing number of users, concerned about the health and quality of life, look for, in addition to conventional treatments, plants as an alternative way of curing diseases (GUERRA, Biosci. J., v. 26, p. 442, 2010). The objective of this study was to study the uses and risks of medicinal plants used by the population.

Experimental Part: It is a cross-sectional study conducted from February to April 2012, with structured questionnaires that were applied in the Central Basic Health Unit in the city of Ijuí/RS. The descriptive statistics were applied. The project was approved by the Ethics Committee in Research of UNIJUÍ.

Results/Discussion: It was interviewed 166 users, most women (86%). The mean age was 45 years old. All respondents do or have done use of plants for medicinal purposes and 98.2% believe that these herbal health have benefits, and only 46.39% associated the use of plants to health risks. As for the therapeutic indications of these species were mostly coming from the family (71.69%), followed by friends (14.45%) and neighbors (4.82%), and only 3.01% reported receiving medicinal plants medically indicated, and only one respondent said he received help in pharmacy. The respondents were asked about how to use plant species and 49.4% consume only fresh plant, 15.66% use only sachet and 12.04% said they use, in addition to the fresh plant or sachet, also syrups, capsules, ointments and tinctures.

Conclusion: It is observed that the use of natural resources continues to occur based on family influence rather than scientific sources and through health professionals. Added to this, it calls attention to the lack of concern by the majority of the sample of the risks associated with the use of medicinal plants in its different presentations. Effective measures are needed in order to contribute to the rational use of medicinal plants and herbal medicines, besides the engagement from the health professional.