



HEALTH ALTERNATIVE: POPULAR HERBAL MEDICINE PRODUCED BY A GROUP OF FARMERS

ALTERNATIVAS PARA A SAÚDE: FITOTERÁPICOS POPULARES PRODUZIDOS POR UM GRUPO DE AGRICULTORAS

ALTERNATIVAS PARA LA SALUD: FITOTERAPIAS POPULARES PRODUCIDOS POR UN GRUPO DE AGRICULTORAS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to show the herbal medicines produced by farmers from southern Rio Grande do Sul used in health care as complementary to conventional medication. **Method:** an exploratory and descriptive study of a qualitative approach, carried out in 2012, using the methods of participant observation, focus group and individual interviews to collect data with the farmers group “Esperança”: alternative health that began its activities at the end of the 80s, with the support of the local Catholic church and some participants of the Women's Peasant Movement, in order to empower farmers in caring for medicinal plants. **Results:** the study revealed that medicinal plants and the popular herbal medicines play an important role in the care of rural households and can contribute positively to the restoration and/or prevention of various problems, acting, most often as a complement to allopathy. **Descriptors:** Community Health Nursing; Medicinal plants; Rural population.

RESUMO

Objetivo: apresentar os fitoterápicos produzidos por agricultoras do Sul do Rio Grande do Sul utilizados no cuidado à saúde como complementares à medicação convencional. **Método:** estudo exploratório e descritivo, de abordagem qualitativa, realizado em 2012, utilizando os métodos da observação participante, do grupo focal e de entrevistas individuais para a coleta de dados, com o grupo de agricultoras Esperança: saúde alternativa, o qual iniciou as atividades no final da década de 80, com o apoio da igreja católica local e de algumas participantes do Movimento das Mulheres Camponesas, com o objetivo de capacitar as agricultoras no cuidado com plantas medicinais. **Resultados:** o estudo revelou que as plantas medicinais e os fitoterápicos populares possuem um papel importante no cuidado das famílias rurais e podem contribuir positivamente para o restabelecimento e/ou prevenção de diversos problemas, agindo, na maioria das vezes, como uma forma complementar a alopatia. **Descritores:** Enfermagem em Saúde Comunitária; Plantas Medicinais; População Rural.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: presentar las fitoterapias producidos por agricultoras del Sur de Rio Grande do Sul, utilizados en el cuidado a la salud como complementar a la medicación convencional. **Método:** estudio exploratorio y descriptivo, de enfoque cualitativo, realizado en 2012, utilizando los métodos de la observación participante, del grupo focal y de entrevistas individuales para la recolección de datos, con el grupo de agricultoras “Esperança”: salud alternativa, el cual inició las actividades en el final de la década del 80, con el apoyo de la iglesia católica local y de algunas participantes del Movimiento de las Mujeres Campesinas, con el objetivo de capacitar las agricultoras en el cuidado con plantas medicinales. **Resultados:** el estudio reveló que las plantas medicinales y las fitoterapias populares poseen un papel importante en el cuidado de las familias rurales y pueden contribuir positivamente para el restablecimiento y/o prevención de diversos problemas, actuando, en la mayoría de las veces, como una forma complementar a la alopatía. **Descriptor:** Enfermería en Salud Comunitaria; Plantas Medicinales; Población Rural.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of medicinal plants in health care was one of the first therapeutic resources used by the ancient civilizations.¹ Its application is connected to a set of beliefs and values since that time allowing the formation of a list of knowledge that enables care in health or illness situations.² This knowledge was inherited, expanded and diversified through interpersonal relationships, supported in the cultural care provided primarily by women.³

The woman, by gender issues, became responsible for the family care, and it is expected to play the role of family caregivers during different illnesses of generations. These experiences allowed performing various activities related to care, such as food preparation, syrups, infusions, poultices, ointments; environmental cleaning; and some basic procedures, such as bathing, umbilical stump care, and dressings.⁴⁻⁶ Due to their communication skills, women culturally developed networking and mutual support, enabling them to care more efficiently, becoming excellent caregivers. For this reason, women are identified in both the socio-cultural context and for themselves, as responsible for family care.⁷

Among these networks, there is the movement of farmers, which in Brazil since the 80s, has emerged as a space that allows the approach of these women, the search for their rights and the establishment of a form of cultural resistance, which knowledge is passed on through the generations and the bonds are strengthened. Among the activities carried out by these groups, there is the use of medicinal plants in the family care.⁸

After settling in a particular environment, rural families develop skills that allow them to live in a particular habitat. These capabilities are organized between sociability, leisure, and care of vital needs, which change at different times of use and cohabitation with the environment. Groups of women and mothers, who favor the creation of belonging to community ties and close relationships of cooperation between the neighborhoods develop collective actions, such as the formation of religious communities to seek better conditions of survival. This model allows developing a relative autonomy, which is reinforced with the distance from large urban centers.⁹

This autonomy is reflected in the care and decisions about them, which take place based on their self-assessment of gravity.¹⁰ Another highlighted action is the preparation of

homemade medicinal products from medicinal plants for the treatment of the different diseases of body and soul.^{6,11-2}

It is considered one of the great challenges of nursing is to combine its practices with the families cared and offered them more consistent alternative care with their needs.¹³

OBJECTIVE

- To present the herbal medicines produced by farmers in the southern Rio Grande do Sul, used in health care as complementary to conventional medication.

METHOD

Article elaborated from the dissertation << Farmer on family care with the use of medicinal plants >> submitted to the Graduate Program in Nursing at the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel), Pelotas (RS), Brazil, 2012.

This is a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive research, linked to the project “Bioactive plants for human use by families of ecological base farmers in the southern Rio Grande do Sul”, conducted by the Nursing School of the Federal University of Pelotas, with a partnership of Embrapa Clima Temperado. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Federal University of Pelotas, under number 072/2007.

The study was conducted in Rincão da Cruz district in Pelotas/RS, with a group of 15 farmers, which is located in the colonial area of the city, one of the most representative places of the settlement of Italian immigrants from the southern Rio Grande do Sul. The town is highlighted for having small farms, developing family farming, and be located at 60 km from the county headquarters.¹⁴

The group of women farmers Esperança: alternative health, began its activities at the end of the 80s, with the support of the local Catholic church and some participants of the Women’s Peasant Movement to empower farmers in caring for medicinal plants. After this training, the women continued the meetings, which were initially carried out in their homes and later began to occur in the hall of the local Catholic church, the current headquarters of the group.¹⁵ Currently, fifteen women aged 20 and 77 years old are part of this group.

Data collection occurred from August to October 2011 and from March to June 2012. Participant observation, focus groups, and individual interviews were used as a collection method. All data were transcribed and arranged by thematic groups. Later, there was a re-reading of the transcripts and notes,

remarks on the context to highlight the key ideas discussed as subtopics.¹⁶ The theoretical support in all steps was used to understanding, interpretation, and criticism of the work.

The survey of medicinal plants used in the preparation of elixirs, syrups, and ointments, took place during a workshop with the farmer's group. After transcription of the testimonies gathered during participant observation and focus groups, medicinal products that the group prepared and common names of the plants used were listed. Based on the popular names cited, there was a search for plants identified taxonomically images in databases generated by Ceolin¹¹, Borges¹⁷, and Lopes¹². These authors conducted ethnobotanical studies in the region covered by the Bioactive project. At the last meeting, the images were presented to the farmers to confirm or not the identity of the species used.

Medicinal plants from the Resolution (RDC) 10 of 2010 of the National Health Surveillance

Agency were analyzed.¹⁸ The not covered medicinal plants were discussed in this document from an extensive literature review conducted by Lorenzi and Matos¹⁹ and current scientific literature.

RESULTS

The farmers group Esperança: Alternative Health develops various care actions. Among them, there is the preparation of eight elixirs, two syrups, and six ointments, from 45 medicinal plants, and honey, propolis, bee wax, tar, and Vaseline. The group carries out the production of these preparations to dispose of the active principles of plants at any time of the year, affordable, as medicinal plants have a seasonal growth.

These data are shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3, which exhibit, elixirs, syrups, and ointments, with their compositions, indications and usage modes respectively.

Table 1. Elixirs prepared by the group Esperança: Alternative Health of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, 2012.

Elixir	Composition	Indication	Way to use
Elixir of bladder	Dyes mallow (Malva sylvestris), pata-de-vaca (Bauhinia sp.), quebra-pedra (Phyllanthus sp.) tansagem or transagem (Plantago sp.).	Cystitis (bladder inflammation), burning or pain when urinating, frequent urine and very little.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir of flu	Dyes of garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), eucalyptus (<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.), fel-da-terra (<i>Lepidium bonariensis</i>), macaé (<i>Leonurus ribiricus</i>), propolis, elderberry (<i>Sambucus australis</i>) and tansagem or transagem (<i>Plantago</i> sp.).	Flu, sinusitis, bronchitis and asthma.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir of menopause	Dyes of açoita-cavalo (<i>Luehea divaricata</i>), agoniada (<i>Plumeria lanciofoliata</i>), carob (<i>Jacaranda puperula</i>), calendula (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>) and tarumã (s.i)*.	Symptoms and discomfort associated with menopause, heat wave, nervousness.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir of the woman	Dyes of açoita-cavalo (<i>Luehea divaricata</i>), agoniada (<i>Plumeria lanciofoliata</i>), carob (<i>Jacaranda puperula</i>), espinheira-santa (<i>Maytenus ilicifolia</i>), purple-ipe (<i>Tabebuia</i> sp.) and tansagem ou transagem (<i>Plantago</i> sp.).	Problems of ovarian, uterus, desregulares periods, vaginal discharge.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir of pains	Dyes of herb-silvana, passion fruit (<i>Passiflora</i> sp), mil em-rama (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), bark of mulungu (<i>Erythrina speciosa</i>) and quina (<i>Discaria</i> sp.).	For pain in general.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir of Figatil	Dyes of artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), boldo (<i>Plectranthus</i> sp.) or boldo-da-folha-miúda (<i>Plectranthus</i> sp.), gervão (<i>Stachytarpheta cayennensis</i>), jurubeba (<i>Solanum</i> sp.) and losna	Digestive problems, gas, indigestion and menstrual cramps.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.

	(Artemisia absinthium).		
Elixir of nerves	Dyes of assaú (s.i), jurubeba (Solanum sp.), passion fruit (Passiflora sp.) and mulungu (Erythrina speciosa).	Nervousness, anxiety, insomnia.	20 drops 3 times a day after meals.
Elixir Digestive	Dyes of açoita-cavalo (Luehea divaricata), rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis), angico (Anadenanthera colubrina), cassáu (s.i)* and tansagem or transagem (Plantago sp.).	Stomach problems; gastritis; heartburn; ulcer. Fortifying the blood and stimulating appetite.	20 drops 3 times a day before meals.

* (s.i) - No botanical identification.

Table 2. syrups prepared by the group Esperança: Alternative health of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, 2012.

Syrup	Composition	Indication	Way of use
Angico Syrup	Leaf and bark of angico (Anadenanthera colubrina) and leaf of fig tree (s.i)*.	It has antibiotic action and can be used for all kinds of cough, throat infection and lung problems.	3 times a day: 1 tablespoon for adults. And 1 teaspoon or dessert spoon for children, depending on their age.
Herbal Syrup	Leaf of cambará (s.i)*, avenca (s.i)*, eucalyptus (Eucalyptus sp.), poejo (s.i)*, guaco (Mikania laevigata), malva (Malva sylvestris); tansagem ou transagem (Plantago sp.), bergamota (Citrus sp.), manjerona (s.i), limão (Citrus sp.), orange (Citrus sp.) and honey.	It has expectorant action and can be used in flu, cold and cough.	3 times a day: 1 tablespoon for adults and 1 teaspoon for children.

* (s.i) - No botanical identification.

Table 3. Ointments prepared by the group Esperança: alternative health of Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, 2012.

Ointment	Composition	Indication	Way to use
Propolis ointment	Liquid Vaseline, wheat germ oil and propolis tincture.	Pimples; skin patches and skin suffered by the sun.	Massaging the place 3 times a day. For the face, evening use.
Miraculous ointment	Vaseline, rosin, bees wax, German balm leaves (Cotyledon sp.), Comfrey (Symphytum officinale) and elderberries (Sambucus australis).	Sores in general; skin cancer; chilblains and cracks.	Massaging the place 3 times per day
Calminex ointment	Liquid vaseline, bees wax, camphor (Artemisia camphorata) powder and propolis tincture.	muscle aches, bruises, sprains and relaxing massages.	Massaging the place 3 times a day and/or according to pain.
Arnica ointment	Liquid Vaseline, bees wax and dye arnica (Solidago sp.).	Beats; bruises, muscle aches.	Massaging the place 3 times per day
Ointment for Allergy	Liquid Vaseline, bees wax and calêndula flour (Calendula officinalis).	Any type of allergy.	Massaging the place 3 times per day
Psoriasis ointment	Liquid Vaseline, bees wax and são joão liana flower tincture (Pyrostegia venusta).	Eczema; erysipelas and other similar problems.	Massaging the place 3 times per day

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the southern Rio Grande do Sul farmers have an accumulated body of knowledge of the interaction of man with nature, established in Brazil since before colonization. This knowledge comes from a collection of facts and it is established as a system of concepts, beliefs, and perceptions of the world around them. This includes the way these people observe and measure everything that surrounds them, as solving their problems and validating new information.²⁰ This knowledge is an important health care tool and sustainable use of natural resources in the region.

Among the 16 listed herbal medicines presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3, it was found that only the syrup Angico and ointments Arnica, Calminex, and Psiorisis have no medicinal plant contemplated in Resolution (RDC) 10 of 2010, of the National Agency Sanitary Surveillance (ANVISA).¹⁸ The ointment propolis does not use the medicinal plant in its preparation, but propolis and wheat germ oil.

The Propolis is a complex mixture, formed by resinous and balsamic material collected by bees in the branches, flowers, pollen, buds, and exudates of trees.²¹ The wheat germ is a widely product used in food.

Of the forty-five plants mentioned, eight were identified botanically (maidenhair, cambará, Cassau, silvana grass, fig tree, pennyroyal, marjoram, and tarumã). Seventeen are presented in the DRC 10 (artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*), Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), garlic (*Allium sativum*), boldo (*Plectranthus* sp.) Boldo-da-folha-miúda (*Plectranthus* sp), Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), espinheira-santa (*Maytenus Maytenus*), eucalyptus (*eucalyptus* sp.), guaco (*Mikania laevigata*), jurubeba (*Solanum* sp.), mallow (*Malva silvestris*), passion fruit (*Passiflora* sp.), mil em-rama (*Achillea millefolim*), mulungu (*Erythrina speciosa*) quebra-pedra (*Phyllanthus* sp.), elderberry (*Sambucus australis*), tansagem or transagem (*Plantago* sp.)).¹⁸

Elixirs are prepared from medicinal plants with alcoholic base, usually suitable for oral ingestion, internal use. Generally, grain alcohol is used.

The elixir of the bladder consists of four medicinal plants. Of them, three are included in the DRC 10.¹⁸ Among the indications, the quebra-pedra (*Phyllanthus* sp.) is highlighted, having a proven action in the treatment of nephrolithiasis, corroborating the statement of herbal medicine in the case of burning or

pain when urinating of urine and very often small quantities. These signs may indicate kidney stones.

Mallow (*Malva silvestris*) and the tansagem (*Plantago* sp.) are indicated for respiratory disease and inflammation of the mouth and pharynx, and its use is restricted to topically.

The elixir of the bladder, possessing the medicinal plant pata-de-vaca (*Bauhinia* sp.) has a proven action as hypoglycemic agents,¹⁹ it can act reducing the symptoms of diabetes mellitus. This fact makes the use of this elixir worrying because the farmers indicate the preparation of medicinal plants based on symptoms, and one of the indications of this herbal medicine is polyuria, also present in cases of cystitis, and hyperglycemia. The problem is that this herbal medicine may be indicated in case of hyperglycemia, masking a symptom of diabetes mellitus, a disease that affects 30% of the Brazilian adult population.²²

The Elixir for Flu comprises propolis and six more herbs. There is the indication of the DRC in 10¹⁸ in garlic (*Allium sativum*) and elderberries (*Sambucus australis*) in cases of flu and cold, corroborating the popular indication. However, it is observed that the mallow (*Malva silvestris*) and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.) have no indication for use orally but topical and inhalational respectively.

The Elixir of Menopause is indicated for the symptoms be related to menopause, such as the heat wave and nervousness. It is composed of five medicinal plants, and only the calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) is in the DRC 10 and indicated for topical use.¹⁸

For ovarian problems, uterus, not regular periods, discharge, the Elixir of women is indicated, which has six medicinal plants in its composition. They are in the DRC 10 espinheira-santa (*Maytenus Maytenus*), indicated for dyspepsia and worked as anti-inflammatory steroid, and tansagem or transagem (*Plantago* sp) indicated for topical use.¹⁸

In Elixir of Pains is observed that, of the five plants used, three are in the DRC 10, and passion fruit (*Passiflora* sp.) and bark of mulungu (*Erythrina speciosa*) are indicated as mild tranquilizers for cases of anxiety and insomnia, and mil em-ramas (*Achillea millefolim*) can be used to dyspepsia, fever, inflammation and cramping, acting in abdominal pain and gastric discomfort.¹⁸ Because of the proven actions of the plants used in this elixir, it appears that it has soothing action and can contribute in gastric disorders, supporting the popular indication.

In Elixir of Figatil composition, three medicinal plants are used artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*), boldo (*Plectranthus* sp) and jurubeba (*Solanum* sp.) that have proven their action for stomach problems as instructed by the RDC 10.¹⁸ Also two plants are used: a losna (*Artemisia absinthium*), used internationally to treat problems in the liver, gallbladder and loss of appetite; and stachytarpheta cayennensis (*cayennensis* *Stachytarpheta*), which has a long history of use as an anthelmintic.¹⁹ Given the data, it can be said that the elixir has active ingredients that act on the digestive problems.

To carry out the Elixir of Nerves, women used four medicinal plants. Among them, the cassaú cannot be identified botanically at the time of data collection, and the others are covered by the RDC 10 as jurubeba (*Solanum* sp) indicated for dyspepsia, and passion fruit (*Passiflora* sp.) and the mulungu (*Erythrina speciosa*) as soothing and insomnia.¹⁸ These data allow to state that the elixir really has soothing action and can be used in cases of anxiety, and insomnia, confirming the information given by the group.

The Elixir Digestive has in its composition five medicinal plants, rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) has active ingredients that act on dyspepsia and tansagem or transagem (*Plantago* sp.) indicated as topical in the DRC 10.¹⁸ The açoita-cavalo (*Luehea divaricata*) has proven as an antitumor action and can be used, including the development of pharmaceuticals for this purpose.²³ Therefore, it can be said that this elixir has proven action in the gastric system.

The syrup is prepared containing medicinal plants, water, sugar or honey used for throat problems, cough and cold, usually suitable for oral ingestion. The syrup Angico uses the colubrina *Anadenanthera* plant, popularly known as angico. Its bark is used in several regions of Brazil against a cough, bronchitis and whooping cough, and the resin in the manufacture of chewing gum indicated for respiratory treatment.¹⁹

In Herbal syrup, ten medicinal plants and honey are used, a substance derived from the nectar of plants processed by the digestive enzymes of worker bees, comprising water, glucose, fructose, sucrose, mineral salts and vitamins essential to health. In addition to the high energy value, has known medicinal properties, being a food recognized antibacterial action used by man since the beginning.²⁴

Among the plants used, according to the RDC 10, eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.) is indicated for inhalation, mallow (*silvestris*

Malva) in topical use, tansagem (*Plantago* sp.) for respiratory disease and inflammation of the mouth and pharynx, and guaco (*Mikania laevigata*) for colds, flu, allergic and infectious bronchitis as expectorant.¹⁸ Therefore, the syrup is composed of medicinal plants that have important action in the symptoms of cold, flu, and sputum as pointed out by the group. However, it is also used in its composition two plants mentioned above, and orally indication has not been scientifically proven and is only recommended for use by inhalation and topically.

The ointment is a fatty compound prepared based on liquid Vaseline, which has in its composition medicinal, aromatic and other substances, usually indicated external use, topically. Propolis ointment does not use medicinal plants in its composition, so it was not analyzed.

In the composition of the miraculous ointment, there was the use of three components in addition to medicinal plants, and of them, the rosin is a product informants acquired at a local hardware and has not been identified its composition and indication of use, because the informants had not in the period of data collection and did not know its composition. On the market, there are three substances called rosin, one used for aesthetic purposes and the other two as lubricants tools, including a product has in its composition a derivative of petroleum, toxic product to humans in oral, inhaled, and topical. Therefore, this product deserves attention. This data shows a weakness in the production of herbal medicines, as well as the group, does not know the composition of rosin, and there are two other different products with the same name, so a toxic product can be used by not recognize it.

The Ointment Calminex is produced based on medicinal plant camphor (*Artemisia camphorata*). It is common to use this plant in agriculture for pest control. In scientific literature, there is no record that it has activity in human beings, but it is widely used in various regions of the country,¹⁹ being validated by the popular knowledge, although there are no scientific studies that prove its action.

In Ointment Arnica, Arnica medicinal plant (*Solidago* sp.) is used preferably topically for the treatment of trauma and bruises, and it can be applied directly to the affected area.¹⁹ Therefore, its indication is by the scientific literature. Therefore, it is concluded that the ointment of arnica can be used for the purposes indicated by the group.

In the Ointment for Allergy, its composition contains liquid Vaseline, which is widely used as a skin moisturizer, beeswax and calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) indicated in the DRC 10, for topical use in inflammations, injuries, bruises, and burns.¹⁸ Due to its composition, the medicinal preparation has a local action for various types of skin inflation and helps in the healing process, which is consistent with some of the popular these particulars. However, there is no scientific evidence of its action in skin cancer.

The Ointment psoriasis has in its composition a unique medicinal plant, liana São João flower (*Pyrostegia venusta*), used in the Mato Grosso region orally for insomnia, having been found another indication of use in human beings in the current scientific records.²⁵

In all sixteen cited herbal medicines, nine of them found an approximation of the scientific literature and the popular use, validating their use. However, it is also worth noting the guidelines and clarification of the components of medicinal preparations produced by the group. Among them, there are highlighted the elixir of bladder, flu, and syrup herbs because they have in their composition medicinal plants, eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp) and mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) that have no indication for use orally; and the miraculous ointment, although it has topical statement, it has in its composition the rosin an unidentified substance that may have in its petroleum composition, toxic substance to human beings.

The use of medicinal plants in care decreases the indiscriminate use of antibiotic therapy, which is currently a public health problem, as can be seen in the words of one of the informants.

I have children; the youngest is always having a sore throat. Or you are taking her all the time to the health center to take antibiotics or [...] I already enter with mallow, violet. Because the antibiotic is not good. (MN51 - 21/05)

It is necessary to guide on the importance of consuming only preparations made from medicinal plants that in their action has been proven or that are popular and known to be used, not accounting for known risk to health. The use of toxic plants is not a problem only to human health but also to the health of other animals. Thus, health professionals must seek knowledge about medicinal plants, not only about medicine but also the toxicity²⁶.

In the compounds, it is very important to attend the interaction between plants and other components that may have been associated with the preparation, such as

alcohol, propolis, honey, bees wax, liquid Vaseline and rosin, as some of these have their oral and up the same topic contraindicated.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing that care actions carried out within the family based on the use of medicinal plants are effective, it allows these families have better health. This understanding is essential to the performance of a culturally congruent nursing care and that allows expanding health care practices.

However, it cannot be ignored that many of these practices can cause damage to health due to the false idea that preparations produced based on medicinal plants have few or no adverse effects, or the plants are not composed of chemical components. Thus, it is important that health professionals, especially nursing, approach are that knowledge and complementary to scientific research, improving and enhancing guidance to the public on the use of medicinal plants.

Observing proper care, it is evident that medicinal plants and the popular herbal medicines play an important role in the care of rural households and can contribute positively to the restoration and/or prevention of various problems, acting, most often as an additional allopathy way.

In nursing, it is important to recognize that care actions carried out within the family based on the use of medicinal plants are effective, and allow these families have better health. This understanding is essential to the performance of a culturally congruent care and that allows expanding health care practices to consider other forms of care beyond the practices by the official model of health.

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