LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In December 2019, the world began to witness the spread of a new species of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), also known as the COVID-19. The disease, which has the potential to cause a picture of acute respiratory insufficiency and lead the patient to a premature death, reached in a few weeks, the status of a pandemic, and changed the global economic and social state. Until the end of May 2020, the number of cases of the disease have already reached almost six million people and 400 thousand deaths around the world\(^1\).

In Brazil, due to the low rates of compliance with the social isolation – one of the fundamental measures for the interruption in the number of cases, and the lack of health strategies to mitigate the infection, the country has been showing a worrying increase of diagnoses and records of deaths caused by the new coronavirus.

Currently, there is not yet a specific therapeutic agent to hinder the increase of the disease, due to its wide clinical spectrum. Because of this, international organizations and governmental entities from various countries have been pointing out the need for inclusion of alternatives in order to halt the advance of SARS-CoV-2. Among the possibilities are complementary and integrative practices in health (CIPH). The use of these CIPH is regulated by the National Policy on Complementary and Integrative Practices in Health (NPCIPH), since 2006, in Brazilian lands.

Recently, a document produced by the Network of Traditional Medicines, Complementary and Integrative (NTMCI) Americas, by the Brazilian Academic Consortium of Integrative Health (CABSIN) and the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME/PAHO/WHO) pointed out the possibility of use of CIPH for the complementary treatment of COVID-19\(^2\).

In the field of CIPH one deserves to be highlighted, the phytotherapy. Different clinical evidences have shown that the phytotherapy has played an important role in the control of infectious diseases and are showing positive effects in the treatment of similar viruses, such as the SARS-CoV and influenza H1N1\(^3\). A systematic review that included seven randomized clinical trials in its analysis showed significant effects of the use of phytotherapy combined with palliative medications in improvement of the symptoms presented by patients with COVID-19, indicating a path for the management of this disease\(^4\).

Even with a national policy established for 14 years, and one of the largest biodiversities in the world, Brazil still lacks investments for the strengthening of the phytotherapy in national territory. In addition, clinical studies and cost-effectiveness are compelling. On the other hand, if you want to emerge and take a protagonist role in the fight against the new coronavirus, the country has in his hands a powerful tool for health.

REFERENCES


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