



Tropentag, September 18-20, 2019, Kassel

“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Medicinal Plants as a Complementary Health Treatment by Small-Scale Farmers in South of Brazil

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Abstract

This study was carried out to understand the vulnerability situation of the small-scale farmers at Colônia Maciel, located in the South of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Thus, to get presented results, 206 households were interviewed through semi structured questionnaires from September to December 2018. According to this survey, 65.4% of population studied claims to have health problems. Among the major diseases: heart problems (31.5%), auto immune complications (27%), respiratory limitations (11.7%) and mental health disorders (10.8%) were observed. The population surveyed was also asked about their different forms of health care, 71.2% declare the use of local health service (UBS–Unidade Básica de Saúde). Further, 70.2% make use of prescribed medication and 53.8% make use of not prescribed medication to treat their illness. Still, as complementary form of health care, 79.8% of population use medicinal plants to support formal treatment. Between the most used medicinal plants, stand out: marcela (*Achyrocline satureioides*) 15.9%; funcho (*Foeniculum vulgare*) 7%; camomila (*Matricaria chamomilla*) 6.5%; tansagem (*Plantago major*) 5.6%; boldo (*Peumus boldus*) 5.1%; cidreira (*Melissa officinalis*) 5.6%; and malva (*Malva sylvestris*) 4.2%. These medicinal plants are mainly used for pain and stress alleviation. When asked about the origin of knowledge in medicinal plants, the studied population declared that information was transmitted by family over generations, about medicinal plants properties in this region. Thus, this study identified the need to rescue and intensify the popular and cultural knowledge about medicinal plants, as complementary health treatment.

Keywords: Health conditions, medicinal plants, small-scale farmers