

Living Pharmacies and Medicinal Plants of Dermatological Interest in SUS: Biocultural Innovation for Public Health

Farmácias Vivas e Plantas Medicinais de Interesse Dermatológico no SUS: Inovação Biocultural para a Saúde Coletiva
Farmacias Vivas y Plantas Medicinales de Interés Dermatológico En el SUS: Innovación Biocultural para la Salud

RESUMO

As Farmácias Vivas representam uma inovação biocultural estratégica no Sistema Único de Saúde, pois integram o conhecimento tradicional sobre plantas medicinais com evidências científicas, promovendo saúde coletiva. O objetivo deste estudo foi avaliar o papel das farmácias vivas e plantas medicinais de interesse dermatológico como uma inovação biocultural para a saúde coletiva no âmbito do sistema único de saúde pela pesquisa documental e análise exploratória de conteúdo. Destacou-se o potencial de espécies nativas como algodãozinho e pé-de-perdiz, além de espécies oficializadas no Sistema Único de Saúde e a insipiência na relação das farmácias vivas com o Sistema Único de Saúde e bioculturalidade. Conclui-se que a expansão das Farmácias Vivas e a divulgação da Farmacopeia Popular do Cerrado são fundamentais para a consolidação da política de saúde pública.

DESCRIPTORES: Bioculturalidade; Cerrado; Medicina Tradicional; Cosméticos

ABSTRACT

Living Pharmacies represent a strategic biocultural innovation within the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS), as they integrate traditional knowledge about medicinal plants with scientific evidence, promoting collective health. The objective of this study was to evaluate the role of living pharmacies and medicinal plants of dermatological interest as a biocultural innovation for collective health within the SUS through documentary research and exploratory content analysis. The potential of native species such as algodãozinho and pé-de-perdiz, as well as species officially recognized in the SUS, was highlighted, as well as the incipient relationship between living pharmacies and the SUS and bioculturality. It is concluded that the expansion of Living Pharmacies and the dissemination of the Popular Pharmacopoeia of the Cerrado are fundamental for the consolidation of public health policy.

DESCRIPTORS: Bioculturality; Cerrado; Traditional Medicine; Cosmetics

RESUMEN

Las Farmacias Vivas representan una innovación biocultural estratégica dentro del Sistema Único de Salud (SUS) de Brasil, ya que integran el conocimiento tradicional sobre plantas medicinales con la evidencia científica, promoviendo la salud colectiva. El objetivo de este estudio fue evaluar el rol de las farmacias vivientes y las plantas medicinales de interés dermatológico como una innovación biocultural para la salud colectiva dentro del SUS, mediante investigación documental y análisis de contenido exploratorio. Se destacó el potencial de especies nativas como el algodãozinho y el pé-de-perdiz, así como de especies reconocidas oficialmente en el SUS, y la incipiente relación entre las farmacias vivientes, el SUS y la bioculturalidad. Se concluye que la expansión de las Farmacias Vivas y la difusión de la Farmacopeia Popular del Cerrado son fundamentales para la consolidación de las políticas de salud pública.

DESCRIPTORES: Bioculturalité ; Cerrado ; Médecine Traditionnelle ; Cosmétiques

RECEIVED: 10/30/2025 APPROVED: 11/13/2025

How to cite this article: Oliveira ACM, Rosa ALD, Silva JG, Severino LOS, Peixoto JC. Living Pharmacies and Medicinal Plants of Dermatological Interest in SUS: Biocultural Innovation for Public Health. *Saúde Coletiva* (Edição Brasileira) [Internet]. 2025 [acesso ano mês dia];16(101):17760-17767. Disponível em: DOI: 10.36489/saudecoletiva.2025v16i101p17760-17767

ID Ana Carolina Martins de Oliveira
Pharmacy Student. Evangelical University of Goiás
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6840-3238>

ID Ana Luiza Diniz Rosa
Pharmacy Student. Evangelical University of Goiás
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8223-1754>

ID Jonatã Guimarães da Silva
Pharmacy Student. Evangelical University of Goiás
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5589-7599>

ID Larissa de Oliveira Santos Severino
Pharmacy Student. Evangelical University of Goiás.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8990-6440>

ID Josana de Castro Peixoto
Professor. Evangelical University of Goiás and State University of Goiás
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3496-1315>

INTRODUCTION

Phytotherapy has deep roots in popular consciousness, which has recognized its effectiveness and legitimacy since ancient times.

The Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) works with the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices (PNPIC), which encourages the implementation of traditional Chinese medicine/acupuncture, homeopathy, phytotherapy, anthroposophic medicine, and thermalism/crenotherapy⁽¹⁾.

In this scenario, Living Pharmacies emerge as strategic devices that materialize these political principles, integrating the cultivation, processing, and dispensing of medicinal plants based on scientific evidence and respect for traditional knowledge. These initiatives are particularly relevant in the care of dermatological conditions—highly prevalent conditions in primary care that often require accessible and culturally appropriate therapeutic alternatives.

The Popular Pharmacopoeia of the Cerrado, in turn, is a fundamental tool in this process, systematizing traditional knowledge about medicinal species in the biome and establishing parameters for their safe use. This study aimed to analyze the promising interface between living pharmacies, medicinal plants of dermatological interest, and public health, examining

their potential as a biocultural innovation in the Unified Health System.

METHOD

This study is characterized as qualitative research, which adopted the documentary research methodology and exploratory content analysis to achieve its central objective: to evaluate the role of Living Pharmacies and medicinal plants of dermatological interest as a biocultural innovation for Public Health within the scope of the Unified Health System (SUS). The documentary analysis consisted of two main categories of sources: A) Official and Regulatory Documents: The National Policy on Medicinal Plants and Herbal Medicines (PNPMF), the National List of Medicinal Plants of Interest to the SUS (RENISUS), and Resolution No. 18/2013 of the Collegiate Board (RDC) of the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa), which provides for good practices in the processing and storage of medicinal plants. B) Technical-Cultural Reference: The analysis focused on the popular Pharmacopoeia of the Cerrado, with special emphasis on the popular monographs of the species *Cochlospermum regium* (algodãozinho) and *Pfaffia* sp. (pé-de-perdiz), valuing the traditional knowledge associated with these plants.

The analytical procedure followed

the steps of exploratory content analysis. Initially, a complete reading of the material was carried out to immerse ourselves in the content. Then, the texts were coded and organized into thematic analysis units, which allowed for the categorization of the data. The categories created were: A) Category 1: Insertion and challenges of phytotherapy and living pharmacies in public health policies; B) Category 2: Species of dermatological interest: Biocultural potential and evidence; and C) Category 3: Integration between traditional knowledge and scientific evidence in dermatological care.

The interpretation of the results was guided by the theoretical framework of collective health and the concept of biocultural innovation, allowing for a discussion that articulates biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and pharmaceutical care in the SUS. The study was limited to the analysis of the selected documentary material, without the collection of primary empirical data.

OBJECTIVE

This study analyzed the role of Living Pharmacies and medicinal plants of dermatological interest as a biocultural innovation for public health within the scope of the Unified Health System (SUS) with a view to characterizing the inclusion of

phytotherapy and Living Pharmacies in Brazil's public health policies, with an emphasis on the context of the Unified Health System.

RESULTS

FARMÁCIAS VIVAS

The Living Pharmacy is a technical project involving research, extension, and community action, ranging from cultivation to the dispensing of magistral and officinal preparations of medicinal plants and phytotherapeutics. It arose from the need to expand the supply of phytotherapeutics and medicinal plants to meet local demand and needs, while complying with the relevant SUS legislation.

The implementation of Farmácia Viva aims to preserve traditional knowledge and native species in the region, in addition to addressing the lack of alternatives for improving the health of the population and integrating popular knowledge with the results of academic research, adapting to regional differences.

DERMATOLOGICAL PLANTS IN FARMÁCIAS VIVAS

Living Pharmacies stand out as privileged spaces for the availability of medicinal plants with proven dermatological action.

Among the species of recognized dermatological importance are aloe vera (*Aloe vera* L.) and Brazilian pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius* Raddi) ⁽⁴⁾. In the context of the Cerrado, species such as *Algodãozinho* (*Cochlospermum regium* (Mart. ex Schrank) Pilg.) ⁽⁵⁾; *pé-de-perdiz* ⁽⁶⁾; and *calendula* (*Calendula officinalis* L.). The integration of these species into Living Pharmacies follows the guidelines of Anvisa RDC No. 18/2013, which establishes good practices for the processing and storage of medicinal plants within the SUS. This standardization ensures the quality, safety, and efficacy of the

products handled, which are fundamental for dermatological care ⁽⁷⁾.

DESCRIPTION OF PLANT MONOGRAPHS COTTON

Cotton is a common plant in Cerrado environments. Herbalists say that there are two types of cotton: purple and white, with long stems, which may or may not form clumps. Its stems are thin, as is its bark, which has a bitter taste. When cut, the bark releases a sticky substance with a smell similar to that of cotton fruit. In August and September, the leaves dry out, leaving only the stalks. The flowers of white and purple *algodãozinho* are similar. The cotton plant blooms from May and remains in bloom until September. When cut, the plant may sprout again and produce off-season flowers, known as early flowers ⁽⁵⁾.

White and purple cotton have the same medicinal use. The powder or sprinkles made from purple cotton are stronger and should be used in smaller doses than white cotton. Its preparations can treat: uterine fibroids, itching, skin blemishes, serve as a blood purifier, and are used as an anti-inflammatory, mainly to treat inflammation of the uterus and ovaries, irregular menstruation, sexually transmitted diseases, rheumatism, gastritis, and ulcers. It is used to treat swelling of the legs through local baths; used to treat earaches and impingement. The flowers, leaves, roots, and fruits of the plant are used ⁽⁵⁾.

POPULAR MONOGRAPHY OF THE PERDIZ PLANT

There are two types of *pé-de-perdiz*, smooth and hairy, both of which have the same medicinal value. Traditionally, smooth *pé-de-perdiz* is more suitable for women, and hairy *pé-de-perdiz* is more suitable for men. The root of *pé-de-perdiz* is recommended as an anti-inflammatory, blood purifier, and treatment for

infections, rheumatism, and sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis. For women, lady's mantle is used to treat uterine and ovarian infections, stimulate pregnancy, regulate menstruation, and cleanse the uterus after childbirth. For men, it is used to treat prostate inflammation.

The parts of the bird's foot trefoil used to prepare home remedies are the fresh or dried leaves and roots. The fruit of the redroot pigweed is small. It measures approximately half a centimeter in height and half a centimeter in diameter. It is round in shape and covered with very fine hairs. Similar to the castor bean, the fruit of the redroot pigweed is made up of three buds, is dry, and has a hard consistency.

DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Health has made available to the population a list of 71 medicinal plants (RENISUS) for dispensing in the SUS. Currently, the SUS offers 12 herbal medicines as part of its health strategy: artichoke, aroeira, aloe vera, cascara sagrada, espinheira santa, devil's claw, guaco, mint, soy isoflavone, common plantain, willow, and cat's claw.

In Brazil, in 2006, the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices (PNPIC) offered phytotherapy to users of the Unified Health System (SUS), mainly in the context of Primary Health Care (PHC). However, there is significant resistance from managers within municipal public administrations, mainly, and consequently low acceptance of this practice by PHC professionals. In addition to a lack of training for PHC professionals ⁽²⁾.

The integration of Living Pharmacies and the use of medicinal plants with dermatological activity in the SUS represents a significant advance for Public Health, aligning with the principles of universality, compre-

hensiveness, and equity. This strategy goes beyond simply offering a phytotherapeutic product, constituting a social technology that articulates popular knowledge, biodiversity, and pharmaceutical care ⁽²⁾.

The availability of species such as *Aloe vera*, with proven emollient and healing properties, and *Schinus terebinthifolius*, with anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, offers concrete alternatives for health problems that often do not find satisfactory answers in conventional allopathy or whose treatment is economically burdensome for the population ⁽⁹⁾.

The use of native species such as *Algodãozinho* and *Pé-de-Perdiz* enhances the development of local production chains, reducing dependence on external inputs and promoting a

solidarity economy

Therefore, the promotion of Living Pharmacies and research into plants of dermatological interest constitute a public health strategy that values Brazilian biocultural diversity. It promotes health justice by expanding access to effective and culturally meaningful care, strengthens environmental sustainability, and contributes to the construction of a truly pluralistic health system centered on the needs of the population.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that Living Pharmacies, linked to the use of medicinal plants with proven dermatological potential, are a biocultural innovation of great relevance to the

SUS. They embody the principles of Public Health by synergistically integrating the appreciation of traditional knowledge, the conservation of Cerrado biodiversity, and the provision of more accessible, equitable, and culturally appropriate health care.

The analysis showed that species such as *algodãozinho* and *pé-de-perdiz*, documented in the Popular Pharmacopoeia of the Cerrado, represent a therapeutic heritage that is still underutilized.

However, the full realization of this potential faces significant obstacles, and there is a need to overcome resistance from managers and to train primary health care professionals in the safe and rational management of these resources.

REFERENCES

1. BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria de Atenção à Saúde. Departamento de Atenção Básica. Política nacional de práticas integrativas e complementares no SUS: atitude de ampliação de acesso / Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria de Atenção à Saúde. Departamento de Atenção Básica. – 2. ed. – Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2015.96 p.: il.
2. TAVARES, A. F. et al. Farmácias Vivas no Sistema Único de Saúde: uma análise sobre sustentabilidade e acesso a plantas medicinais. *Saúde em Debate*, v. 45, n. 129, p. 335–349, 2021.
3. DIAS, J. E.; LAUREANO, L. C. (Coord.). *Farmacopeia Popular do Cerrado*. 1. ed. Goiás: Articulação Pacari, 2010.
4. BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria de Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação e Insumos Estratégicos em Saúde. Departamento do Complexo Industrial e Inovação em Saúde. *Plantas Medicinais e Fitoterápicos no SUS: Inovações e Desafios para a Saúde Coletiva*. Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2022.
5. FARMACOPEIA POPULAR DO CERRADO. *Mono-grafias populares*: algodãozinho. Goiás: Articulação Pacari, 2009.
6. FARMACOPEIA POPULAR DO CERRADO. *Mono-grafias populares*: pé-de perdiz. Goiás: Articulação Pacari, 2010.
7. BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. Agência Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária (Anvisa). Resolução RDC nº 18, de 3 de abril de 2013. Disponível em: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/saudelegis/anvisa/2013/rdc0018_03_04_2013.html. Acesso em: 30 set.2025.
8. BRASIL. Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria de Ciência, Tecnologia e Insumos Estratégicos. Departamento de Assistência Farmacêutica e Insumos Estratégicos. *Programa Nacional de Plantas Medicinais e Fitoterápicos*. Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2009. 136p. (2009).
9. OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR, W. P. et al. Potencial anti-inflamatório e cicatrizante de espécies vegetais do Cerrado: uma revisão integrativa. *Revista Fitos*, v. 14, n. 3, p. 345–362, 2020.