Author's response to reviews

Title: Animal-based remedies as complementary medicines in Santa Cruz do Capibaribe, NE Brazil

Authors:

  Rômulo RN Alves (romulo_nobrega@yahoo.com.br)
  Helenice N Lima (rrnalves@yahoo.com.br)
  Marília C Tavares (tavares.marilia@hotmail.com)
  Wedson MS Souto (wedson.medeiros@gmail.com)
  Raynner Rilke D Barboza (raynner.rilke@uol.com)
  Alexandre Vasconcellos (alexvasconcellos@yahoo.com.br)

Version: 2 Date: 30 June 2008

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor

BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine

We are grateful to the reviewers for their significant contributions in order to improve our present manuscript. We corrected the errors pointed and accepted most of their suggestions on the manuscript. We submitted the English version of the manuscript to the appreciation of a native speaker. Please see below some observations to notes of the reviewers

Sincerely yours,

Rômulo Alves

Reviewer: Ana Haydee Ladio

Results

This section must be improved with more information.

- Done. Please see the revised version of the text.

Background

The author must explain in the text what it is “partner-cultural structure”

- We have deleted. The text was written in a better way on the new version of the manuscript.

Methods
In this section more information is needed in relation to sociocultural aspects of the human population. In addition, I would like to see in the ms more data about medicinal practices, rituals, beliefs that included animals to understand its importance and use maintenance.

- We recognized the importance of information on medicinal practices, rituals, and beliefs that included animal. However, researches relying on those aspects don’t exist for the studied area. Our paper represents the pioneering on such practices in the region. However, we added some available informations. Please see the revised version of the manuscript.

Reviewer: Ina Vandebroek

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

The article by Alves et al. represents a qualitative ethnozoological study in Brazil. The main goal of the research was to make an inventory of animal remedies sold by 16 merchants in markets of Santa Cruz do Capibaribe City. However, according to the title, the manuscript deals with “animal-based remedies as complementary medicine among people in semi-arid region, NE Brazil”. I consider the present title too broad and general in relation to the focus of the Ms., which is on animal remedies, merchants and markets in the city of a particular municipal district.

- We have changed the text according to his/her suggestion.

The manuscript also needs to be reviewed by a native English speaker to improve grammar. It contains a lot of awkward spelling; two examples of which include: (1) [start quote] In the literature, coincidences came across regarding the usage of species utilized for medicinal means in the municipality of Santa Cruz [end quote]; (2) [start quote] ...according to a local story, while the Cyanocorax cyanopogon ingests the alimentary remains of an asthmatic one, this will be cured [end quote].

- We submitted the English version of the manuscript to the appreciation of a native speaker for a properly revision.

My main problem with this manuscript is that its conclusions (about the choice of animals as medicines as compared to conventional, Western medicine; about the
persistence of traditional knowledge in the face of modernization; about conservation priorities for medicinal animals) are not based on primary research data. These conclusions do not follow from the research objective, which is to develop an inventory of medicinal animals. In general, I find the manuscript quite meager in its discussion and conclusions.

- We agree with the reviewer. The text has been changed according to his/her suggestions.

In addition, I would like to see some clarification for the following observations: - interviewees reported 37 animal species and the authors describe that this is a “great variety”. On the other hand, from literature data it is known that Alves and Rosa registered 97 animal species in metropolitan areas in N and NE Brazil. Hence, in comparison with the latter result 37 is not such an extraordinary high number of species

- Alves’s & Rosa’s (2007) work was accomplished in 5 different cities only and its sum pointed out 97 medicinal species. Separately, the number of each city is quite smaller. We improved the composition in the revised version of the manuscript.

when the authors refer to "public and free markets" do they refer to different types of markets? What is the difference between "public" and "free"?

Public markets constitute the meeting point between buyers and salespersons, in which the trade kind of their products is based on the exchange and occurs in certain days of the week. The markets, that appeared up from the informality of the fairs, were multiplying and becoming solid constructions, once the population that lived in cities in which the fairs would not be constant, it was necessary a continuous inputs supply for their maintenance. The text was corrected.

what is meant with "predefined interviewees". The use of "predefined" sounds awkward in this context

- The "Predefined" term refers to the sampling type in which seeks to interview all the subjects. It is a very common technique in studies regarding medicinal biological resources on public markets and fairs (see "Alves & Rose 2006, 2007, Almeida and Albuquerque, 2002"

it is unclear what the authors mean when they first state that 2 medicinal species have not been previously documented in Brazil (among them the egg shell of ostrich) and next continue to say that “ostrich is used and documented in Brazil, although it was registered as medicinal in other countries”. I presume that they forgot to add the word “not” in this sentence

- The text was revised. Please see the revised version.
what are "illnesses that are identified as treatable"?

- The information is added in the revised manuscript

Reviewer's report

Reviewer: Ulysses Albuquerque

Reviewer's report:

- We agree with observations of the reviewer, and have changed the text according to his/her suggestion.