



HISTORICAL ETHNOBOTANY OF CANNABIS SATIVA L. IN BRAZIL: DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF MEDICINAL USES BEFORE CRIMINALIZATION

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The historiography of cannabis in Brazil is often centered on prohibition and stigma, leaving its earlier medicinal uses underexplored. This research aims to recover historical evidence of its therapeutic applications in Brazil before prohibition, highlighting its role in medical and pharmaceutical practices. The methodology relies on systematic archival research in historical libraries and collections in Araraquara and São Paulo, with plans to expand to Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Ouro Preto, and Salvador. Sources include pharmacopoeias, formularies, medical dictionaries, and therapeutic manuals, identified using keywords such as “Cannabis sativa,” “Cannabis indica,” “cânhamo,” and “hashish”. To date, 32 documents, from 1865 to 1953, have been analyzed. Cannabis references commonly cited flowers, leaves, and seeds, typically prepared as tinctures, alcoholic or oily extracts, emulsions, and cataplasms. Therapeutic indications focused on neurological and neuropsychiatric disorders, with cannabis used as a hypnotic, sedative, antispasmodic, stimulant, or calming agent. It was also employed in pain management related to gastric, menstrual, neuralgic, rheumatic, and migraine conditions, as well as in respiratory disorders like asthma and bronchitis. Gynecological and sexual uses included menstrual regulation, suppression of lactation, and aphrodisiac effects, with applications in digestive, urinary, dermatological, rheumatic, and ocular disorders. Partial results also revealed controversies in medical discourse: while some records highlight cannabis as an effective treatment for epilepsy, anxiety, or withdrawal syndromes, others describe toxic outcomes such as delirium, psychosis, or addiction. These apparent contradictions may reflect the complex regulatory role of the endocannabinoid system in maintaining physiological balance. This study indicates cannabis’s presence in Brazilian medical practice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, officially recognized in pharmacopoeias and formularies with diverse therapeutic uses. Continued archival research will deepen understanding of how medical knowledge, cultural perceptions, and regulatory approaches shaped the trajectory of cannabis in Brazil.

Keywords: *Historical ethnobotany, Cannabis sativa, therapeutic uses, documentary research, knowledge recovery, medical history.*

