

Yvanna Carla de Souza Salgado
(Organizadora)

Patologia: Doenças Parasitárias



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Yvanna Carla de Souza Salgado
(Organizadora)

Patologias: Doenças Parasitárias

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APRESENTAÇÃO

No volume II da coleção Patologia intitulado: Doenças Parasitárias, apresentamos em capítulos, diversos artigos de pesquisas realizadas em diferentes regiões. A temática inclui estudos sobre doenças tropicais, protozooses e parasitoses; dados epidemiológicos, diagnósticos e tratamentos, bem como temáticas correlacionadas e alguns acidentes por animais peçonhentos.

As doenças parasitárias decorrem da presença de macroparasitas (p. ex. helmintos) e/ou microparasitas (p. ex. protozoários), e envolvem em seu ciclo, hospedeiros, isto é, organismos vivos em que os parasitas se desenvolvem. De modo geral, podem ser transmitidas de diferentes formas como: água ou alimentos contaminados, picadas ou fezes de insetos ou outros animais, sexualmente, através de transfusão sanguínea e transplante de órgãos, de mãe para filho durante a gestação; sendo que cada parasitose tem suas características de contaminação. Suas manifestações clínicas são variáveis dependendo do agente etiológico e o local onde se instala, e podem variar de leves e moderadas até graves.

Apesar dos avanços relacionados às medidas preventivas, controle e tratamento, e da diminuição significativa dos níveis de mortalidade; as doenças parasitárias ainda constituem um problema sério de Saúde Pública no Brasil. A incidência das parasitoses tem relação direta com as condições socioeconômicas, com hábitos alimentares e de higiene, crescimento populacional, com saneamento básico, aspectos climáticos, educação, entre outros. No intuito de aprofundar o conhecimento acerca das parasitoses, este volume traz informações de estudos regionais sobre as doenças parasitárias mais conhecidas.

A obra é fruto do esforço e dedicação das pesquisas dos autores e colaboradores de cada capítulo e da Atena Editora em elaborar este projeto de disseminação de conhecimento e da pesquisa brasileira. Espero que este livro possa somar conhecimentos e permitir uma visão crítica e contextualizada; além de inspirar os leitores a contribuírem com pesquisas para a promoção de saúde e bem estar social.

Yvanna Carla de Souza Salgado

SUMÁRIO

CAPÍTULO 1 1

ESTUDO EPIDEMIOLÓGICO DA OCORRÊNCIA E VIAS DE TRANSMISSÃO DA DOENÇA DE CHAGAS NA REGIÃO NORTE E NORDESTE DO BRASIL NO PERÍODO DE 2009 A 2016

Kamilla Peixoto Bandeira
João Ancelmo dos Reis Neto
João Vitor de Omena Souza Costa
Priscilla Peixoto Bandeira
Renata Valadão Bittar
Monique Carla da Silva Reis
José Edvilson Castro Brasil Junior

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918031

CAPÍTULO 2 8

TAXA DE MORTALIDADE PELA DOENÇA DE CHAGAS NA REGIÃO NORDESTE DO BRASIL E NA BAHIA DE 2010 À 2015

Edna Moura de Santana Brito
Mithaly de Jesus Teixeira
Paulo José dos Santos Matos
Marla de Jesus Teixeira
Jorge Sadao Nihei
George Mariane Soares Santana

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918032

CAPÍTULO 3 16

DOENÇA DE CHAGAS NA AMAZÔNIA: UM ESTUDO EPIDEMIOLÓGICO NA CIDADE DA MAIOR USINA HIDRELÉTRICA GENUINAMENTE BRASILEIRA

Ana Caroline de Oliveira Coutinho
Aira Beatriz Gomes Pompeu
Erielson Pinto Machado
Rafael Vulcão Nery
Raimundo Batista Viana Cardoso
Silvio Henrique dos Reis Júnior

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918033

CAPÍTULO 4 25

AUMENTO DA DISTRIBUIÇÃO GEOGRÁFICA DE *Rhodnius stali* E *Rhodnius montenegrensis*: PRIMEIRO RELATO NA REGIÃO DO VALE DO JURUÁ, ACRE, BRASIL

Adila Costa de Jesus
Fernanda Portela Madeira
Madson Huilber da Silva Moraes
Adson Araújo de Moraes
Gilberto Gilmar Moresco
Jader de Oliveira
João Aristeu da Rosa
Luis Marcelo Aranha Camargo
Dionatas Ulises de Oliveira Meneguetti
Paulo Sérgio Bernarde

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918034

CAPÍTULO 5 35

ESPÉCIES DE TRIATOMÍNEOS OCORRENTES NOS ESTADOS DO ACRE E RONDÔNIA, AMAZÔNIA OCIDENTAL, BRASIL

Gabriela Vieira de Souza Castro
Mariane Albuquerque Lima Ribeiro
Leandro José Ramos
Janis Lunier Souza
Simone Delgado Tojal
Jader de Oliveira
João Aristeu da Rosa
Luis Marcelo Aranha Camargo
Dionatas Ulises de Oliveira Meneguetti

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918035

CAPÍTULO 6 48

UMA ABORDAGEM INTEGRAL AO PORTADOR DE DOENÇA DE CHAGAS: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA

Jadianne Ferreira Da Silva
Aguyda Naiara De Lima Pereira Bento
Allana Regina De Lima Silva
Cassandra Barros Correia De Moura
Ericka Azevedo Dos Santos
Ericka Vanessa De Lima Silva
Manuela De Souza Calado

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918036

CAPÍTULO 7 55

ANTITRYPANOSOMAL ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

Dionatas Ulises de Oliveira Meneguetti
Adila Costa de Jesus
Fernanda Portela Madeira
Romeu Paulo Martins Silva

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918037

CAPÍTULO 8 73

ASPECTOS EPIDEMIOLÓGICOS DA LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL NO NORDESTE BRASILEIRO (2007-2017)

Ana Maria Fernandes Menezes
Kaic Trindade Almeida
Maryana de Moraes Frota Alves
Kelle Araújo Nascimento Alves
Ana Karla Araujo Nascimento Costa

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918038

CAPÍTULO 9 85

ASPECTOS EPIDEMIOLÓGICOS E SOCIODEMOGRÁFICAS DA LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL HUMANA NO MUNICÍPIO DE OURICURI, PERNAMBUCO, BRASIL, NO PERÍODO DE 2013 A 2017

Sarah Mourão de Sá
Ana Maria Parente de Brito
Marília Rabelo Pires
José Alexandre Menezes da Silva

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.9781918039

CAPÍTULO 10 91

DISTRIBUIÇÃO EPIDEMIOLÓGICA DA LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL (CALAZAR), NO PERÍODO DE 2013 A 2018, NO MUNICÍPIO DE TUCURUÍ - PA

Juliane da Silva Barreiros
Isabelle Guerreiro de Oliveira
Letícia Sousa do Nascimento
Thays Queiroz Santos
Daniele Lima dos Anjos Reis
Kátia Simone Kietzer
Anderson Bentes de Lima

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180310

CAPÍTULO 11 98

URBANIZAÇÃO DA LEISHMANIOSE TEGUMENTAR AMERICANA NO MUNICÍPIO DE TUCURUÍ, PARÁ, BRASIL

Ingridy Lobato Carvalho
Juliane Moreira de Almeida
Gabriel Costa Vieira
Hiandra Raila Silva da Costa
Tatiana Menezes Noronha Panzetti

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180311

CAPÍTULO 12 109

LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL CANINA NO MUNICÍPIO DO IPOJUCA - PE/BRASIL

Hallysson Douglas Andrade de Araújo
Jussara Patrícia Monteiro Vasconcelos
Eduardo José da Silva
Josinaldo Leandro dos Santos
Jackson José dos Santos
Roseane Cabral de Oliveira
Odilson Bartolomeu dos Santos
Andrea Lopes de Oliveira
Juliana Carla Serafim da Silva

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180312

CAPÍTULO 13 111

ESTUDO COMPARATIVO DA RESPOSTA TERAPÊUTICA À ANFOTERICINA B LIPOSSOMAL NA LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL EM ADULTOS COM E SEM HIV

Marcello Bertoldi Sanchez Neves
Bruna Thais Raiter
Keli Balduino de Ramos
Luiz Felipe Espindula Beltrame
Igor Valadares Siqueira
Matheus Marques Rodrigues de Souza
Mauricio Antônio Pompílio
Anamaria Mello Miranda Paniago
Angelita Fernandes Druzian

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180313

CAPÍTULO 14 120

LEISHMANIOSE VISCERAL NA MACRORREGIÃO DO VALE DO SÃO FRANCISCO E ARARIPE, PERNAMBUCO – 2001-2015

Cesar Augusto da Silva
Tathyane Trajano Barreto

Artur Alves da Silva

Luiz Carlos Lima da Silva Junior

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180314

CAPÍTULO 15 128

ANÁLISE DE BIÓPSIAS CUTÂNEAS E PERFIL DE PACIENTES ATENDIDOS NO SERVIÇO DE DERMATOLOGIA DE UM HOSPITAL PÚBLICO COM SUSPEITA CLÍNICA DE LEISHMANIOSE TEGUMENTAR

Caroline Louise Diniz Pereira

Cynthia Pedrosa Soares

Fábio Lopes de Melo

Milena Lima Rodrigues

Silvania Tavares Paz

Selma Giorgio

Francisca Janaína Soares Rocha

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180315

CAPÍTULO 16 134

ANÁLISE DOS RESULTADOS DAS AÇÕES INTEGRADAS DE VIGILÂNCIA E ASSISTÊNCIA NA MELHORIA DA OPORTUNIDADE DO DIAGNÓSTICO E TRATAMENTO DOS CASOS DE LVH NA REGIÃO DO SERTÃO DO ARARIPE, PERNAMBUCO, BRASIL DE 2014 A 2017

Sarah Mourão de Sá

Ana Maria Parente de Brito

Marília Rabelo Pires

José Alexandre Menezes da Silva

Regina Coeli Ferreira Ramos

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180316

CAPÍTULO 17 141

NANOEMULSIONS CONTAINING CHALCONE: DEVELOPMENT, OPTIMIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF *IN VITRO* CYTOTOXICITY AGAINST AMASTIGOTA FORM OF *Leishmania amazonensis*

Daniela Sousa Coelho

Letícia Mazzarino

Beatriz Veleirinho

Ana Paula Voytena

Thaís Alberti

Elizandra Bruschi Buzanello

Milene Hoehr de Moraes

Mário Steindel

Rosendo Yunnes

Marcelo Maraschin

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180317

CAPÍTULO 18 155

MALÁRIA GRAVE IMPORTADA E SEPSE POLIMICROBIANA ASSOCIADA A CATETER VASCULAR: RELATO DE CASO NO RIO DE JANEIRO

Isabelle Christine de Moraes Motta

Dirce Bonfim de Lima

Paulo Vieira Damasco

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180318

CAPÍTULO 19	160
A IMPORTÂNCIA EM PROMOVER MEDIDAS PROFILÁTICAS CONTRA MALÁRIA EM PAÍSES SUBDESENVOLVIDOS	
<i>Bruno Vinícios Medeiros Mendes</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180319	
CAPÍTULO 20	167
PROMOÇÃO DA SAÚDE ACERCA DA MALÁRIA JUNTO AOS AGENTES COMUNITÁRIOS DA UNIDADE BÁSICA DE ILHAS DA REGIÃO AMAZÔNICA	
<i>Márcia Ribeiro Santos Gratek</i>	
<i>Eloise Lorrany Teixeira Benchimol</i>	
<i>Leandro Araújo Costa</i>	
<i>Ana Salma Laranjeira Lopes Pires</i>	
<i>Lindolfo Cardoso Nunes</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180320	
CAPÍTULO 21	171
JOGOS EDUCATIVOS COMO UMA ESTRATÉGIA PARA O CONTROLE DA MALÁRIA EM UMA ÁREA DE ALTA ENDEMICIDADE NO MÉDIO RIO NEGRO, AMAZONAS, BRASIL	
<i>Jessica de Oliveira Sousa</i>	
<i>José Rodrigues Coura</i>	
<i>Martha Cecília Suárez-Mutis</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180321	
CAPÍTULO 22	186
TOXOPLASMOSE CEREBRAL EM PACIENTE HIV NEGATIVO RELATO DE CASO DIAGNOSTICADO EM AUTÓPSIA	
<i>Paula Regina Luna de Araújo Jácome</i>	
<i>Kátia Moura Galvão</i>	
<i>Mariana de Albuquerque Borges</i>	
<i>Agenor Tavares Jácome Júnior</i>	
<i>Roberto José Vieira de Mello</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180322	
CAPÍTULO 23	192
EFEITO OVICIDA E LARVICIDA DO ÉTER METIL DILAPIOL (EMD) EM <i>Aedes aegypti</i> , MANAUS-AM	
<i>Junielson Soares da Silva</i>	
<i>Ana Cristina da Silva Pinto</i>	
<i>Luiz Henrique Fonseca dos Santos</i>	
<i>Míriam Silva Rafael</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180323	
CAPÍTULO 24	205
ASPECTOS EPIDEMIOLÓGICOS, CLÍNICOS E TERAPÊUTICOS DAS ENTEROPROTOZOSES NO BRASIL: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA	
<i>Raimundo Diego Ferreira Amorim</i>	
<i>Ionara Bastos de Moraes</i>	
<i>José Denilson Ferreira Amorim</i>	
<i>Iago Sávyo Duarte Santiago</i>	
<i>Pedro Walisson Gomes Feitosa</i>	
<i>Diogenes Pereira Lopes</i>	
<i>Maria do Socorro Vieira Gadelha</i>	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180324	

CAPÍTULO 25 223

FATORES SOCIOAMBIENTAIS E CLÍNICOS DA ESQUISTOSSOMOSE MANSONI NA ZONA DA MATA DE PERNAMBUCO

Claudinelly Yara Braz dos Santos
Paula Carolina Valença da Silva
Aline Vieira da Silva
Letícia Moura Vasconcelos
Ilana Brito Ferraz de Souza
Taynan da Silva Constantino
Antônio José de Vasconcelos Neto
Florisbela de Arruda Camara E Siqueira Campos

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180325

CAPÍTULO 26 235

ESQUISTOSSOMOSE EM PERNAMBUCO: ANÁLISE PRÉ E PÓS IMPLANTAÇÃO DO PROGRAMA SANAR PARA ENFRENTAMENTO DE DOENÇAS NEGLIGENCIADAS

Monique Oliveira do Nascimento
Rebeka Maria de Oliveira Belo
Alyson Samuel de Araujo Braga
Cindy Targino de Almeida
Tamyres Millena Ferreira
Hirla Vanessa Soares de Araújo
Karyne Kirley Negromonte Gonçalves
Simone Maria Muniz da Silva Bezerra

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180326

CAPÍTULO 27 245

QUAL IMPACTO DA COBERTURA DA ESTRATÉGIA SAÚDE DA FAMÍLIA NAS INTERNAÇÕES E ÓBITOS POR DOENÇAS INFECCIOSAS E PARASITÁRIAS?

Valdecir Barbosa da Silva Júnior
Maria Tatiane Alves da Silva
Danilson Ferreira da Cruz
Amanda Priscila de Santana Cabral Silva

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180327

CAPÍTULO 28 256

ESQUISTOSSOMOSE: UMA DOENÇA NEGLIGENCIADA NO ESTADO DE ALAGOAS

Nathalia Lima da Silva
Luana Carla Gonçalves Brandão Santos
Gisélia Santos de Souza
Larissa Suzana de Medeiros Silva
Carolayne Rodrigues Gama
Bárbara Melo Vasconcelos
Lorena Sophia Cadete de Almeida Lemos Vilela
Karol Bianca Alves Nunes Ferreira
Raíssa Fernanda Evangelista Pires dos Santos
Thycia Maria Cerqueira de Farias
Alessandra Nascimento Pontes
Hulda Alves de Araújo Tenório
Mariana Gomes de Oliveira
Tânia Katia de Araújo Mendes
Keila Cristina Pereira do Nascimento Oliveira
Maria Luiza de Azevedo Garcia
Beatriz Santana de Souza Lima
Luciana da Silva Viana

Marilucia Mota de Moraes

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180328

CAPÍTULO 29 261

UM TEMPO ONDE A CIÊNCIA FAZ HISTÓRIA E AS DOENÇAS PARASITÁRIAS AINDA SÃO MARCADORES DAS MAZELAS SOCIAIS

Randyston Brenno Feitosa

Maria Alexandra De Carvalho Meireles

Rovilson Lara

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180329

CAPÍTULO 30 263

DOENÇAS TROPICAIS NEGLIGENCIADAS: ESTADO DA ARTE DAS PUBLICAÇÕES CIENTÍFICAS

Leonardo Pereira Tavares

Hellen Lima Alencar

Pedro Paulo Barbosa Oliveira

Maria do Socorro Vieira Gadelha

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180330

CAPÍTULO 31 266

ANÁLISE DA EPIDEMIOLOGIA DE ACIDENTES ESCORPIÔNICOS NO NORDESTE

Hellen Lima Alencar

Leonardo Pereira Tavares

Pedro Paulo Barbosa Oliveira

Maria do Socorro Vieira Gadelha

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180331

CAPÍTULO 32 270

ASPECTOS CLÍNICO-EPIDEMIOLÓGICOS DOS ACIDENTES ESCORPIÔNICOS REGISTRADOS EM UM MUNICÍPIO DO INTERIOR DA AMAZÔNIA: UM CORTE DE UMA DÉCADA

Edson Jandrey Cota Queiroz

Alexandre Vasconcelos Dezincourt

Ana Paula Costa Diniz

Everaldo de Souza Otoni Neto

Emanuel Roberto Figueiredo da Silva

Tyala Oliveira Feitosa Gomes

Caroline Gomes Macêdo

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180332

CAPÍTULO 33 283

INJÚRIA CAUSADA POR ARRAIA DE ÁGUA DOCE (*Potamotrygon* SP.) NO MUNICÍPIO DE AFUÁ, ILHA-DE-MARAJÓ, PARÁ, BRASIL (2017)

Elder Oliveira da Silva

Ednaldo Bezerra Galvão Filho

Pedro Pereira de Oliveira Pardal

Suelen dos Santos Ferreira

Pasionaria Rosa Ramos Ruiz Diaz

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180333

CAPÍTULO 34 296

DOENÇAS DE VEICULAÇÃO HÍDRICA: ESTRATÉGIAS DE EDUCAÇÃO EM SAÚDE

Nathalia Lima da Silva

Luana Carla Gonçalves Brandão Santos
Gisélia Santos de Souza
Larissa Suzana de Medeiros Silva
Carolayne Rodrigues Gama
Bárbara Melo Vasconcelos
Lorena Sophia Cadete de Almeida Lemos Vilela
Karol Bianca Alves Nunes Ferreira
Raíssa Fernanda Evangelista Pires dos Santos
Thycia Maria Gama Cerqueira
Alessandra Nascimento Pontes
Hulda Alves de Araújo Tenório
Mariana Gomes de Oliveira
Tânia Katia de Araújo Mendes
Keila Cristina Pereira do Nascimento Oliveira
Maria Luiza de Azevedo Garcia
Beatriz Santana de Souza Lima
Luciana da Silva Viana
Marilucia Mota de Moraes
Uirassú Tupinambá Silva de Lima

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180334

CAPÍTULO 35 301

ASPECTOS EPIDEMIOLÓGICOS, CLÍNICOS E TERAPÊUTICOS DAS HELMINTÍASES NO BRASIL:
UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA

Ionara Bastos De Moraes
Raimundo Diego Ferreira Amorim
José Denilson Ferreira Amorim
Iago Sávyo Duarte Santiago
Pedro Walisson Gomes Feitosa
Diogenes Pereira Lopes
Marcos Antônio Pereira De Lima
Maria Do Socorro Vieira Gadelha

DOI 10.22533/at.ed.97819180335

SOBRE A ORGANIZADORA..... 315

ANTITRYPANOSOMAL ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

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ABSTRACT: In the search for new alternatives for the treatment of diseases caused by protozoa, studies have directed efforts in research on natural compounds extracted from plants that are effective against them and that have reduced toxicity to human hosts. Among neglected diseases, Chagas disease is one that urgently needs new treatment alternatives, since it has been discovered more than 100 years ago and, up to the present time, there is still no efficient treatment. As a result, the present study aimed to perform a bibliographic review of the Antitrypanosomal Ethnopharmacology in the Brazilian Amazon. Up to the present moment, 62 species of plants of the Brazilian Amazon, distributed in 25 botanical families, have been found to have potential for the production of

anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi* drugs. This potential is still underestimated, since approximately 5% of the vegetables in the Amazon region have been studied in relation to pharmacological characteristics. And this area is promising mainly for the production of drugs in the treatment of neglected diseases, which is a reality in the region. However, in order to advance these researches, it is necessary, besides financial support, the interaction between different laboratories and research groups, thus forming teams with professionals in different areas, which may enhance the level of research in the region and maximize the probability of discovery of new anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi* potential drugs.

KEYWORDS: Antitrypanosomal, Chagas disease and Ethnopharmacology.

RESUMO: Na busca por novas alternativas para o tratamento de doenças causadas por protozoários, estudos têm direcionado esforços em pesquisas sobre compostos naturais extraídos de plantas que são eficazes contra eles e que têm toxicidade reduzida para hospedeiros humanos. Dentre as doenças negligenciadas, a doença de Chagas é uma das que necessitam urgentemente de novas alternativas de tratamento, uma vez que foi descoberta há mais de 100 anos e, até o momento, ainda não há tratamento eficaz. Como resultado, o presente

estudo objetivou realizar a revisão bibliográfica da Etnofarmacologia Antitripanossomal na Amazônia brasileira. Até o presente momento, 62 espécies de plantas da Amazônia brasileira, distribuídas em 25 famílias botânicas, apresentam potencial para a produção de drogas anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi*. Esse potencial ainda é subestimado, uma vez que aproximadamente 5% dos vegetais da região amazônica foram estudados em relação às características farmacológicas. E essa área é promissora principalmente para a produção de medicamentos no tratamento de doenças negligenciadas, o que é realidade na região. No entanto, para avançar nessas pesquisas, é necessário, além do apoio financeiro, a interação entre diferentes laboratórios e grupos de pesquisa, formando equipes com profissionais de diferentes áreas, o que pode potencializar o nível de pesquisa na região e maximizar a probabilidade de descoberta de novas drogas potenciais anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Antitripanossomal, doença de Chagas e Etnofarmacologia

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief History

Triatomines are insects belonging to the family Reduviidae and subfamily Triatominae, being popularly known in Brazil by barbers. There are currently 153 species in the world, distributed in 18 genera (OLIVEIRA; ALEVI, 2007), according to Table 1.

These insects are widely distributed in the Americas, mainly found from the south of the United States to the south of Argentina, being of great importance, since they can transmit the etiological agent *Trypanosoma cruzi*, causer of American Trypanosomiasis, also denominated Chagas disease (CD) (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012).

Although the description of the first species (*Cimex rubrofasciatus*, now *Triatoma rubrofasciata* De Geer, 1773) occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, the contact of this insect with man is quite anterior (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012). The first reported news about the appearance and habits of triatomines occurred in 1590 and was made by Father Reginaldo de Lizárraga, while on an inspection trip to convents in Peru and Chile (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012). It is believed that, by virtue of some records, Charles Darwin also observed these insects on his voyage to South America aboard H.M.S. Beagle, in 1835 (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012).

Chagas disease - or American Trypanosomiasis - was discovered in 1908 by the Brazilian physician Carlos Chagas. He had to diagnose and study clinically the first human case of trypanosomiasis in a child, in 1909 (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; JUBERG et al., 2004). With its discovery, Carlos Chagas honored the medical epidemiologist Oswaldo Cruz with his name on the causative agent *T. cruzi* (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; NETO; PASTERNAK, 2009). To

date, Carlos Chagas is the only researcher to describe the etiologic agent, vector, host and disease, with Chagas disease being the only example of the history in which the causal agent was discovered before the disease itself (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; TARTAROTTI, 2004).

Tribe	Genus	Species (n)
Alberproseniini	<i>Alberprosenia</i>	2
	<i>Belminus</i>	8
Bolboderini	<i>Bolbodera</i>	1
	<i>Microtriatoma</i>	2
	<i>Parabelminus</i>	2
Cavernicolini	<i>Cavernicola</i>	2
Rhodniini	<i>Psammolestes</i>	3
	<i>Rhodnius</i>	21
Triatomini	<i>Dipetalogaster</i>	1
	<i>Eratyrus</i> 2	2
	<i>Hermanlentia</i> 1	1
	<i>Linshcosteus</i> 6	6
	<i>Meccus</i> 6	6
	<i>Mepraia</i> 3	3
	<i>Nesotriatoma</i> 3	3
	<i>Panstrongylus</i> 15	15
	<i>Paratriatoma</i> 1	1
	<i>Triatoma</i> 74	74
Total		153

Table 1. Number of species in the subfamily Triatominae (OLIVEIRA; ALEVI, 2007).

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1.1 Epidemiology

Considered endemic in South and Central America, Chagas disease has also been spread to other parts of the world as a result of immigration, being more and more frequent the registries of the disease in the United States, in European countries, Australia and Japan (SCHMUNIS; YADON, 2010).

Worldwide, more than 14 million people are infected by the parasite that causes Chagas disease (BRASIL, 2008). It is estimated that around 100 million people are still at risk of contracting this disease (OYAFUSO et al., 2008). The annual incidence is 200,000 new cases registered in several countries, it is estimated that there are more than 300,000 individuals infected in the United States, 5,500 in Canada, 80,000 in Europe and the Western Pacific region, 3,000 in Japan and 1,500 in Australia (COURA; VIÑAS, 2010).

In Latin America, the disease affects about eight million people (RASSI- JR; RASSI; MARIN NETO, 2010), being among the four main endemics, being one of its major health problems (ARGOLO et al., 2008). It mainly affects the populations of the poor countries of the American continent (TARTAROTTI et al., 2004; CARNEIRO-FILHO; LIMA, 2008). Endemic countries include those in South America such as Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and, in Central America, Mexico (TARTAROTTI et al., 2004).

Until the early 90's, Chagas disease was classified by the World Bank as the most serious of parasitic diseases in Latin America, with a socio-economic impact (measured as DALY - Disability-Adjusted Life Years) considerably higher than the combined effects of all the other parasitic infections (DIAS; PRATA; SCHOFIELD, 2002).

In Brazil, it is estimates that there are approximately 1.9 million people infected by *T. cruzi*. Although Brazil has been declared free of vector transmission of Chagas disease by *T. infestans*, acute cases have still been recorded due to transmission by wild triatomine species, mainly in the Amazon region.

Currently, new cases and outbreaks of acute Chagas disease (ACD) have been most recorded in the Legal Amazon region, where Chagas disease started to cause problems as a human disease in the Amazon, starting in 1969 and with greater emphasis from 1996 (PINTO et al., 2007).

From June 2006 to June 2007, 116 people were infected with the disease in the State of Pará after ingesting typical juices from the region (mainly açaí and bacaba) crushed with the barber (REIS, 2007). According to the Evandro Chagas Institute, from 1968 to 2005, on average, 12 cases per year were recorded in the Amazonian region orally, that is, there was an increase of 867% (REIS, 2007).

Between 2007 and 2011, there were 849 cases of ACD in Brazil, most of them by oral transmission (70%). Of these cases, 611 (72%) were diagnosed in the State of Pará (BRASIL, 2012). The Ministry of Health points out at least three reasons for this situation: the underreporting of cases until then, deforestation and burning in the Amazon and lack of care with hygiene in the artisanal processing of the fruit (BRASIL, 2005).

The same was observed in the State of Acre, a Brazilian State where the first autochthonous case was recorded in the 80's (BARATA et al., 1988). Recently, in the year 2016, two outbreaks caught the attention: one in the region of Alto Juruá, where 9 cases were registered, three of which evolved to death (BARBOSA, 2016), and another in the municipality of Feijó, with confirmation of 17 cases (Nascimento, 2016a), which influenced an increase of more than 216% in cases of Chagas disease in the State of Acre (NASCIMENTO, 2016).

1.2 Treatment

In the treatment of human infection, hundreds of drugs were tested against CD. The first compounds developed experimentally for the specific treatment of CD, after its discovery in 1909, were atoxyl (arsenic), tincture of fuchsin, emetic tartar (pentavalent antimonial) and mercury chloride. All of these compounds proved to be ineffective in the proposed treatment (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; COURA; CASTRO, 2002).

In 1636, a quinoline derivative with mildly parasitocidal activity was first used in the treatment of the acute form of CD (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MAZZA; CÁSSIO; ZUCARDI, 1937; OLIVEIRA et al., 2008). In 1968, a meticulous evaluation of the drugs available for *T. cruzi* under *in vitro* and *in vivo* conditions was performed. Based on the results obtained, 27 compounds and more than 30 antibiotics were considered inactive and others presented suppressive effects of parasitemia, but no curative effects were observed: bisquinaldine, aminoquinolines (pentaquine, isopentaquine and primaquine), trivalent arsenic, aminoglycosides, nitrofurans and the antibiotics (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; BRENER, 1968).

In the late 60's and early 70's, encouraging events occurred for the treatment of CD, resulting in drugs such as nifurtimox and benznidazole (Figure 3), with nifurtimox (5-nitrofurans) being introduced in therapy in 1967 (MAZZA; CÁSSIO; ZUCARDI, 1937), and benznidazole (2-nitroimidazole) in 1972 (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MAZZA; CÁSSIO; ZUCARDI, 1937; CROFT; BARRET; URBINA, 2005).

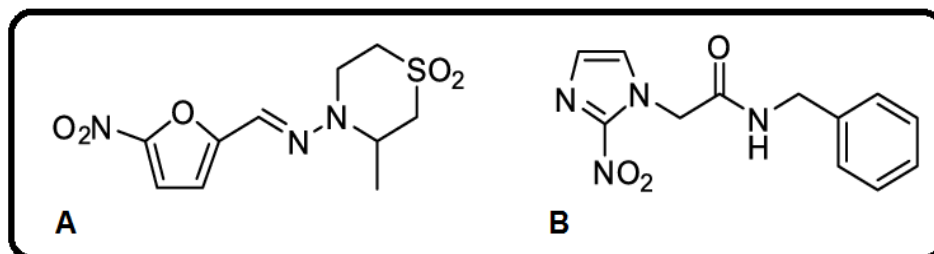


Figure 3. Chemical structure of the: a) Nifurtimox, b) Benzonidazole

Nifurtimox was withdrawn from the market because of the various side effects suffered by patients, and since the 80's, nifurtimox has been discontinued, first in Brazil and then in other South American countries (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MAZZA; CÁSSIO; ZUCARDI, 1937; RASSI et al., 2002). On the other hand, benzonidazole, a little more effective, although it presents moderate toxicity, it manages to decrease the parasitic rate in the blood and the tissues, if administered in the right dose and during the period of two months in the acute phase. However, no drug has demonstrated curative ability (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; RASSI et al., 1999).

Some drug combinations are also cited (Table 2). These drug interactions and treatment times should be adapted according to the observation of side effects.

Drugs and Doses	Duration
Nifurtimox 8mg / kg / day + Benzonidazole 5mg / kg / day	60 days
Nifurtimox 8mg / kg / day + Allopurinol 8-10mg / kg / day	60 days
Benzonidazole 5mg / kg / day + Allopurinol 8-10mg / kg / day	60 days
Nifurtimox 8mg / kg / day + Ketoconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days
Nifurtimox 8mg / kg / day + Fluconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days
Nifurtimox 8mg / kg / day + Itraconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days
Benzonidazole 5mg / kg / day + Ketoconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days
Benzonidazole 5mg / kg / day + Fluconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days
Benzonidazole 5mg / kg / day + Itraconazole 5-6mg / kg / day	60 days

Table 2. Combinations of drugs, used in the treatment of DC (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; COURA, 2009).

Other double or triple associations can be tested, between drugs with different mechanisms of action. This proposal does not preclude investigations of new drugs to eliminate the etiological agent, but until the drug ideal for the specific treatment of CD is discovered, new strategies need to be developed to achieve greater efficacy with the old drugs, using combinatorial treatments and developing courses of rational experimentation for new drugs (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; COURA, 2009).

To date, the two main drugs used in the treatment of CD are nifurtimox and

benzimidazole, even almost 50 years after its discovery. Some researchers have described that research on the control of transmission and management of (CD) infected patients is discouraged due to the lack of investments, because it is a neglected disease that has little potential for overall profit for pharmaceutical companies (MALAFAIA; RODRIGUES, 2010).

In her doctoral thesis, researcher Chung Man Chin, presents the efficiency that the chemical compound nitrofurantoin demonstrates in exterminating the *T. cruzi*. “Nitrofurantoin is used as a topical antimicrobial because of its high degree of toxicity, but it presents high activity against the parasite”, says Chung. Thus, the proposal was to reduce this toxicity so that the compound could be used orally and for treatment during the chronic phase of the disease. For this, Chung modified the molecule of nitrofurantoin, provoking a change that increases the selectivity for the parasite. Nitrofurantoin has a high mutagenic action and low solubility, which causes it to be consumed in large quantities. This is the reason for the toxicity of this substance, which can cause hemolysis (breakdown of blood cells), much discomfort, nervous diseases, among other changes. “There are no drugs without adverse side effects, but the idea is to reduce them to the maximum”, says Chung, who found that, among the synthesized derivatives, hydroxymethylnitrofurantoin was the most active in tests performed on *in vitro* cells and the one that presented less toxicity (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; BOSQUESI et al., 2008).

Other chemotherapeutic agents were tested as: TAK-187 and Ravuconazole, Allopurinol, Megazole and Naphthoimidazoles (OLIVEIRA et al., 2008), but none had significant results on its efficiency (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012). Posaconazole, an analogue of itraconazole, has been registered in the European Union, Australia and the United States as a systemic antifungal and is considered a strong candidate for new specific treatments of CD (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; OLIVEIRA et al., 2008).

The effects of B and T lymphocytes (CD4 and CD8) were also investigated on benzimidazole and posaconazole. They showed that the survival rate of mice infected with *T. cruzi* and treated with said compounds was 100%, with about 87% of them being cured after treatment. However, the results indicated that when the infected mice had the presence of the T lymphocyte (CD4) in their immune system, the parasites reappeared after the drug effect, and the survival rate fell to 6%. The result of the treatment in the presence of the T lymphocyte (CD8) was considered intermediate, with survival rates between 81% and 86%, and cure between 31% and 66%. Yet, in the presence of B lymphocyte, the two drugs had different effects. Treatment with benzimidazole resulted in 67% survival rate, with cure rate of 22%. Posaconazole, however, had a more beneficial effect on these animals, accounting for 71% of cure and 100% of survival (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; FERRAZ, 2009).

CD is a current, global and neglected problem. It does not interest the pharmaceutical industry because of the economic profile of the patients, who are usually economically disadvantaged people. The disease has also not been adequately assisted by

governments and is still poorly understood even by physicians, whose training has very few hours on the subject in some institutions (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012).

The CD is framed in a group of diseases where they are known as “Neglected Diseases”, that receive this name because these are diseases that affect thousands of people, in the great majority, with low income and in underdeveloped countries (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012). It is believed that the little investment in their treatment and prophylaxis is due to the level of the population living where these diseases normally occur (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; DNDI, 2006).

Among the diseases that belong to this group, besides CD, we can mention malaria, leishmaniosis, filariasis and dengue. *Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative* reports that only 1% of the 1,393 new drugs registered between 1975 and 1999 were targeted at tropical diseases. These numbers reveal the existence of an excluding research policy, in which only 10% of the world health research expenditure is spent on diseases that represent 90% of the global burden (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; SOBRINHO et al., 2007).

Besides, they often reside in places of difficult access, where they are helpless in relation to basic health, having to look for alternative treatments in plant biodiversity for their illness. However, about 99% of the plants of this region have not yet proven their pharmacological effect and their active principles have not been identified, which represents a major pharmacological and economic potential to be exploited (MENEGUETTI et al., 2014).

Different researchers have demonstrated the popular use of plants in the treatment of parasites such as malaria, leishmaniosis and Chagas disease. Many compounds isolated from plants such as chalcones, alkaloids, naphthoquinones, lignans, neolignans and terpenoids have already described their promising activity against protozoa (MENEGUETTI et al., 2015; RONDON et al., 2012).

In the search for new alternatives for the treatment of diseases caused by protozoa, studies have directed efforts in research on natural compounds extracted from plants that are effective against *them* and that have reduced toxicity to human hosts (MENEGUETTI et al., 2014; MENEGUETTI et al., 2015). As a result, the present study aimed to perform a bibliographic review of the Antitrypanosomal Ethnopharmacology in the Brazilian Amazon.

2 | METHODS

The method used in the present study was a non-systematic review of the literature. Scientific articles, books and official documents of research centers are used, demonstrating the Brazilian Amazon the Antitrypanosomal Ethnopharmacology in the Brazilian Amazon.

3 | DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

3.1 Antitrypanosomal Ethnopharmacology

Medicinal plants have long been used in the treatment of parasitic diseases, and many studies corroborate the therapeutic importance attributed to products of plant origin, as well as describe the trypanosomicidal activity of several natural active principles. The administration of a natural drug, with low toxicity, would cause fewer side effects in the patient. Another advantage would be the lower cost for the population, especially if the drug came from an easily grown plant (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MARQUES, 2010).

Several plants in the Brazilian Amazon can be considered as candidates for the production of a drug against Chagas disease, since they have proven *in vitro* or *in vivo* activities against Chagas disease, leishmaniosis or malaria (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MENEGUETTI et al., 2014; MENEGUETTI et al., 2015; GUIMARÃES; FARIA, 2007), all diseases caused by protozoa, with emphasis on leishmaniasis and Chagas disease, which belong to the same family Trypanosomatidae.

62 species of plants of the Brazilian Amazon, distributed in 25 botanical families (Table 3), have been found to have potential for the production of anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi* drugs (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; MENEGUETTI et al., 2014; MENEGUETTI et al., 2015; GUIMARÃES; FARIA, 2007).

FAMILY	SPECIE
Annonaceae	<i>Annona foetida</i> ; <i>Annona spinescens</i> ; <i>Guatteria foliosa</i> ; <i>Himatanthus obovatus</i> ; <i>Himatanthus sukuuba</i> ; <i>Xylopia aromática</i> .
Apocynaceae	<i>Aspidosperma cylindrocarpon</i> ; <i>Aspidosperma excelsum</i> ; <i>Aspidosperma rigidum</i> ; <i>Aspidosperma spruceanum</i> ; <i>Aspidosperma parvifolium</i> , <i>Aspidosperma oblongum</i> , <i>Aspidosperma megalocarpon</i> , <i>Aspidosperma ulei</i> , <i>Aspidosperma desmanthum</i> , <i>Aspidosperma oblongum</i> and <i>Aspidosperma vargasii</i> ;
Araliaceae	<i>Hydrocotyle bonariensis</i>
Aracea	<i>Montrichardia linifera</i>
Aristolochiaceae	<i>Aristolochia cymbifera</i>
Asteraceae	<i>Bidens pilosa</i> , <i>Trixis</i> spp and <i>Lychnophora</i> spp;
Bignoniaceae	<i>Anemopaegma arvense</i> , <i>Cybistax antisyphilitica</i> and <i>Anemopaegma arvense</i> ;
Cecropiaceae	<i>Cecropia pachystachya</i>
Celastraceae	<i>Maytenus guyanensis</i> ;
Clusiaceae	<i>Garcinia brasiliensis</i> ;
Combretaceae	<i>Combretum leprosum</i>
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Croton cajucara</i> , <i>Croton pullei</i> , <i>Croton Lechleri</i> and <i>Pera benensis</i> ;
Fabaceae	<i>Copaifera reticulata</i> , <i>Copaifera martii</i> , <i>Copaifera paupera</i> , <i>Copaifera officinalis</i> and <i>Copaifera multijuga</i>
Gentianaceae	<i>Tachia grandiflora</i>

Lacistemataceae	<i>Lacistema pubescens</i>
Lecythidaceae	<i>Gustavia elliptica</i>
Malpighiaceae	<i>Banisteriopsis caapi</i>
Meliaceae	<i>Guarea kunthiana</i>
Moraceae	<i>Pourouma guianensis</i>
Piperaceae	<i>Piper glabratum, Piper acutifolium, Piper aduncum, Piper carniconektivum, Piper tuberculatum, Pothomorphe umbellata and Montrichardia linifera</i>
Rutaceae	<i>Esenbeckia febrifuga, Galipea spp and Psychotria viridis;</i>
Simaroubaceae	<i>Picrolemma sprucei, Quassia amara and Simaba orinocensis;</i>
Solanaceae	<i>Physalis angulate</i>
Salicaceae	<i>Casearia sylvestris</i>
Verbenaceae	<i>Lippia alba and Lantana cujabensis</i>

Table 3. Species and families of the plants of the Brazilian Amazon, have been found to have potential for the production of anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi* drugs

Several classes, such as quinones, flavonoids, alkaloids and terpenes are active against the *T. cruzi*. Among the quinoas, we can mention: Naftoquinone b-lapachone, present in several plant species of family Bignoniaceae, has activity against the amastigote, epimastigote and trypomastigote forms of the parasite. Its chemical derivative, 3-allyl-b-lapachone, is active against trypomastigote forms and has been suggested as an alternative drug for use in blood banks (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012; GUIMARÃES; FARIA, 2007).

Plumbagine, isolated from *Pera benensis*, was 100% active at the concentration of 250 µg / mL of contaminated blood. Another plant popularly known as boldo, has benzoquinone embelin and also some alkyl phenols, and the embryo has shown activity against *T. cruzi*, with 100% lysis of the protozoa, at a concentration of 100 µg / mL (GUIMARÃES; FARIA, 2007).

Among the flavonoids, the following are mentioned: 3-methoxyflavone penduletin and flavanone sacuranetine, isolated from *Trixis spp*, eliminated 99 and 100%, respectively, of the infected blood parasite at a concentration of 500 µg / mL (RIBEIRO et al., 1997). In the stratum of *Lychnophora spp*, seven active substances were isolated against trypomastigote forms of *T. cruzi*, among them the flavonoids luteolin and vicenina-2, which demonstrated significant trypanosomicidal activity at the concentration of 500 µg/mL (GRAEL; ALBUQUERQUE; LOPES, 2005). *Lychnophora spp* extract provided 10 flavonoids: that were tested against *T. cruzi*, and the most active substance was quercetin-3-methyl ether, which did not cause lysis of blood cells and at the dose of 500 µg/mL has shown promise for use against *T. cruzi* in blood banks (TAKEARA et al., 2003).

Some alkaloids with trypanosomicidal activity are also cited as: The 2-n-propylquinoline, chimanin B and chimanin D, isolated from *Galipea spp*, presented

activities similar to those of the reference drugs nifurtimox and benznidazole, against five strains of epimastigote forms of *T. cruzi* (GUIMARÃES; FARIA, 2007).

Several terpenes are reported in studies of trypanosomicidal compounds, such as: Caurenoic acid isolated from *Mikania obtusata* (ALVES et al., 1995), *Xylopi frutescens* and from *Viguiera aspilioides* (TAKAHASHI et al., 1994), presented 100% activity against *T. cruzi*, at the concentration of 1000 µg / ml of contaminated blood (ALVES et al., 1995; TAKAHASHI et al., 1994). Other terpenes with action anti-*T. cruzi* are: xylopic acid, isolated from *Xylopi frutescens*, caurenol, isolated from *Viguiera aspilioides* and from *Xylopi frutescens* (TAKAHASHI et al., 1994), diterpenes 17-hydroxycauranol and trachylobanoic acid, isolated from *Viguiera aspilioides*, terpenoids isolated from *Mikania stipulacea* and *Mikania hoehnei* (NASCIMENTO et al., 2004).

Linalool, isolated from the leaves of the species *C. cajucara*, presents action against promastigote cells of the species *L. amazonensis* (ROSA et al., 2003) and against epimastigote and trypomastigote cells of *T. cruzi* (SANTORO et al., 2007). The same was observed with essential oils that contain this metabolite in its chemical composition (MENEQUETTI et al., 2015; SANTORO et al., 2007). One of the mechanisms of action of linalool is to stimulate the production of reactive oxygen species, such as nitric oxide (NO), which inhibits mitochondrial respiratory chain activity and decreases the levels of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and glutathione in cells (RONDON et al., 2012). Linalool also has antibacterial action on cariogenic and periodontopathogenic bacteria (PARK et al., 2012), acting against the species *S. aureus*, *E. faecalis*, *E. coli*, *Klebsiella oxytoca*, *Proteus mirabilis*, *Salmonella typhi* and *P. aeruginosa* (MAZZANTI; BATTINELLI; SALVATORE, 1998). Study carried out with the bacteria *S. aureus*, *E. coli* and *S. typhimurium* describes other mechanisms of action of linalool that cause alteration of permeability and function of the plasma membrane, loss of intracellular matter and, consequently, cell death (MENEQUETTI et al., 2015).

Casear metabolites isolated from *C. sylvestris* have demonstrated a good action against *T. cruzi* and *Leishmania* spp (BOU et al., 2014), probably because they caused the rupture of the parasite's plasma membrane. This causes depletion of ionic gradients, efflux of nutrients and other cytoplasmic components, causing osmotic lysis and, consequently, cell death (MENEQUETTI et al., 2015; MARR; MCGWIRE; MACMASTER, 2012).

Fractions of *C. sylvestris* are also characterized by the presence of substances of interest, such as: coumarins, flavonoids, lignans and various diterpenes (YAMAGUSHI; GUSMAN; VESTENA, 2011). Presenting action against *Leishmania donovani* promastigotes, *T. cruzi* amastigotes, and antimalarial activity action (MESQUITA et al., 2007), besides acting against larvae of *Aedes aegypti* (RODRIGUES et al., 2006) and present antimicrobial action against fungi: *Aspergillus niger*, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, *Candida albicans*, *C. tropicalis* and bacteria: *Bacillus subtilis*, *B. cereus*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Salmonella enteritidis* (MENEQUETTI et al., 2015; FERREIRA et al., 2011).

Tingenone B isolated from *Maytenus guianensis*, showed antiparasitic activity against *T. cruzi* (IC <0.25 µg / mL), *Trypanosoma brucei* (IC <0.25 µg / mL) and *L. infantum* <0.51 µg / mL) (MENEGUETTI et al., 2016). Other compounds with the same skeleton showed great potential for the production of potent drugs against leishmaniasis and Chagas disease (BRASIL, 2005). Previous studies have shown that triterpenoids stimulate granulocytosis and phagocytosis, thus helping to combat infection, causing cytoplasmic extravasation, corpuscle formation and mitochondrial swelling. Another possible explanation for the anti-parasitic activities of these terpenoids is their activation of programmed cell death within the parasites⁵⁰ and interference with the parasite cell differentiation process in the host. This is an extremely complex process involving fine regulation of gene expression (MENEGUETTI et al., 2016; DUSZENKO et al., 2011).

Gross extracts of Brazilian plant species, especially the family *Lauraceae*, have already shown, in *in vitro* trials, that may be useful in combating *T. cruzi*, whose growth has been inhibited by up to 100%. Synthetic substances, such as aromatic diamidines, have also been tested against parasite, showing high activity and selectivity (WU et al., 2012).

In a recent study, researchers tested *in vitro* the effect of crude extracts of 92 Brazilian plant species against the parasite *T. cruzi*, which causes CD. Of the extracts tested, 11 of them presented satisfactory results, seven of which inhibited the growth of the parasite between 50% and 90% and four of them reached an inhibition of 100% (MARQUES, 2010).

Several plants are cited for presenting anti-*T. cruzi* action, and among them we can mention: *Camellia sinensis* (PAVETO et al., 2004), *Baccharis trimera*, *Cymbopogon citratus*, *Matricaria chamomilla* Asteraceae, *Mikania glomerata* Asteraceae, *Ocimum gratissimum*, *Piper regnellii*, *Prunus domestica*, *Psidium guajava*, *Sambucus canadensis*, *Stryphnodendron adstringens*, *Tanacetum parthenium*, and *Tanacetum vulgare* both have a significant effect against the parasite, with the percentage of inhibition of growth between 49.5 and 99%. The extracts showed no cytotoxic effect on sheep red blood cells. These medicinal plants may be alternative sources of new compounds clinically active against *T. cruzi* (BEZERRA; MENEGUETTI; CAMARGO, 2012).

In the Amazon region, we can also mention the *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *Psychotria viridis* that has anti-trypanosomal action against the *Trypanosoma lewisii* and *T. cruzi*. These plants are used in the preparation of a tea known as (Ayahuasca) which is used in religious rituals, and it is believed that it is due to the use of this tea that indigenous people are not infected by *T. cruzi* and *Leishmania sp* (MENEGUETTI; MENEGUETTI, 2014).

4 | FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Up to the present moment, 62 species of plants of the Brazilian Amazon, distributed in 25 botanical families, have been found to have potential for the production of anti-*T. cruzi* drugs. This potential is still underestimated, since approximately 5% of the vegetables in the Amazon region have been studied in relation to pharmacological characteristics. And this area is promising mainly for the production of drugs in the treatment of neglected diseases, which is a reality in the region. However, in order to advance these researches, it is necessary, besides financial support, the interaction between different laboratories and research groups, thus forming teams with professionals in different areas, which may enhance the level of research in the region and maximize the probability of discovery of new anti-*Trypanosoma cruzi* potential drugs.

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