# Peppermint (*Mentha x Piperita*): Use in traditional amazonian phytotherapy for relief of abdominal pain, gas, and cramps

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**ABSTRACT**
The traditions of using medicinal plants in the Amazon keep elements of various cultures. The herbal knowledge of the Amazonian peoples began to incorporate knowledge and practices, mainly from European folk medicine. With their healing strategies redesigned, these populations were then involved in the intense movement of Northeasterners that would introduce elements of African traditions, which no longer arrived as native, authentic knowledge, but as knowledge already validated by a syncretic cultural formation (SANTOS, 2000).

**Keywords:** Traditions, Healing redesigned, Cultural formation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The traditions of using medicinal plants in the Amazon keep elements of various cultures. The herbal knowledge of the Amazonian peoples began to incorporate knowledge and practices, mainly from European folk medicine. With their healing strategies redesigned, these populations were then involved in the intense movement of Northeasterners that would introduce elements of African traditions, which no longer arrived as native, authentic knowledge, but as knowledge already validated by a syncretic cultural formation (SANTOS, 2000).

Their ancestral traditions and wisdom passed down from generation to generation reveal a multitude of plant species with remarkable therapeutic properties. On the other hand, some plants have healing power, but their use requires caution as they can cause toxicity. *Mentha x piperita* known as fine leaf mint, peppermint, sweet mint, pot mint (RODRIGUES, 2019), is an example of a species widely used in the

Amazon region, including in the community of Caratateua, which uses the species to relieve abdominal pain, gas, and colic in both children and adults.

## 2 OBJECTIVE

To investigate the active ingredients and possible therapeutic actions that may occur with the use of *Mentha x piperita*, observing its level of toxicity in the specialized literature.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

The research had a descriptive qualitative approach, being carried out through field research, using *Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) as a data collection technique*, interviews with 25% of the surveyed population and collection of the species for identification. Subsequently, a scientific survey was carried out on the active ingredients of the species and their toxicity in scientific databases.

## 4 DEVELOPMENT

Health caregivers in the community of Caratateua use the peppermint plant (*Mentha x Piperita L)* to combat abdominal pain, gas and cramps. This practice has been developed for many decades by connoisseurs of medicinal species, being passed down from generation to generation. Efficacy in relieving symptoms minutes after its administration is observed, in dosages of one teaspoon for children and 50ml for adults, right after breakfast. Treatment usually lasts a maximum of two days after starting use.

This species is notably known in the literature for its spasmolytic, antivomitic, stomachic, anthelmintic, oral and antibacterial, antifungal and antipruritus properties in topical use (LORENZI, 2008). It is a medicinal plant with significant pharmacological and therapeutic activities. The result of the review revealed that peppermint and its main constituents (pulegone, mentone, menthol, and mentofuran) exhibit some evidence of moderate toxicity. However, health caregivers in the community of Caratateua are unaware of this rate of toxicity of the plant.

## 5 FINAL THOUGHTS

Studies with Mentha piperita have demonstrated the presence of a wide variety of bioactive compounds that represent a rich resource of phytochemicals of great interest for the treatment of various pathologies. Some of the beneficial biological effects show that this plant can play an important role as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anticarcinogenic, antiviral, anti-allergic, and antitumor, indicating its usefulness in the prevention or treatment of various diseases.

In addition, we can say that Mentha piperita is a promising plant that can offer a low-cost alternative strategy for use in medicine and the food industry.

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