Opinion

Fruits of the Amazon: a window of opportunity

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The retrospective analysis of the literature has evidenced for Amazonas, in the last decades, a practically immutable food pattern, characterized by the monotony of its composition, with hyperproteic offer at certain times of the year, depending on the flow of rivers, however of recognized low caloric value, highlighting limited access to fruits, vegetables and legumes. This dietary profile imposes the urgent need for corrective and educational actions that guide public policies on access to food based on the principles of food security, with regard to quantitative adequacy, free from biological risks, valuing local biodiversity by aggregating scientific and technological value to its products, also respecting cultural diversity, as essential foundations for improving the quality of life in the Amazon region. Searching Amazonian biodiversity for native fruits endowed with immense nutritional, functional, economic potential and unparalleled flavors are premises and research line of the Food and Nutrition Group in the Amazon, aiming to fill the information gaps regarding minerals, fiber, vitamins such as carotenoids, vitamin C, polyphenols and consequently bioactive substances. The lack of knowledge of the content of these substances in regional fruits constitutes a great gap for the understanding of the possible agents responsible for the modulating effect of these species on chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and exposure to heavy metals such as lead mercury. Knowledge of the composition of food is an essential tool for countries to achieve food and nutrition security, nutritional education, assessment and adequacy of nutrient intake by individuals and the population. It should be considered that a database has a dynamic character, as the population's eating pattern also evolves, scientific discoveries of new food components and the technological evolution of products offered by the food industry.

The second strategic contribution to the Amazon, aiming above all to improve the population's food standard, are products with added value. The region lacks technologies adapted to the Amazonian reality that allows for an increase in shelf life, considering seasonality and high perishability, and better use of fruits. Thus, it is envisaged the use of them in the form of flour, thus generating important economic opportunities for small and medium producers. The advantage of introducing a product to the market entirely regional, as well as valuing the culture of the region, which is based on the consumption of manioc flour. Why not add value and use colorful flours from arecaceaes, mirtaceae and solanaceae? As a product with added value in the bakery line, reference is made to breads with the addition of colored flours from arecaceaes. Low energy density nectars and mix using low energy density fruits are some of the products in the patent phase that will impact the market. Cubiu jams with low energy density are added.

Another focus of the present proposal is on the impact of the use of arecaceaes, mirtaceaeas and solanaceaeas on rats and humans aiming at the prevention and or recovery of deficient processes.Despite the knowledge of the potential of arecaceaes as a source of energy and carotenoids, dietary fiber, essential fatty acids and minerals, there is much to be studied in relation to the bioavailability of provitamin A and the impact of its use with rats as an experimental and later pre-model. schoolchildren. The results showed that arecaceaes are bioavailable sources of provitamin A, in particular pupunha and tucumã. In the line of mirtaceae and solanaceae, the use of cubiu and camu-camu, as sources of dietary fiber and flavonoids (quercetin) respectively, were tested, and the results were impressive due to the reduction of glucose and cholesterol concentrations in rats, requiring further proof in human beings, ongoing study.

It is concluded that the results stand out for innovation, practical application and quality of life. Fruit growing in the Amazon combined with Science, Technology and Innovation according to local vocations are strategies that positively impact the focus on healthy and varied food, social inclusion and income generation. The rescue of healthy eating habits and practices, through the insertion of fruits from the Amazonian biodiversity and products with added value, in addition to promoting health, can contribute to reinforce food sovereignty and assist in the preservation of the cultural identity of the region and Brazil. In the economic and social aspect, the availability of technically viable products will favor the timidity of the market, combined with a public policy involving the entire production chain. It is expected to contribute to healthy and varied food, public policies, income generation, social inclusion, food and nutrition security and improvement of the population's quality of life.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare have no conflict of interest about the publication of this paper.