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8th meeting on medicinal biotechnology

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS OF THE 8TH MEETING ON MEDICINAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

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Use of Natural Compounds in Obesity: A Study on Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Regarding Supplements

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1. CENTRO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO EM SAÚDE TRANSLACIONAL E BIOTECNOLOGIA MÉDICA (TBIO)/REDE DE INVESTIGAÇÃO EM SAÚDE (RISE-HEALTH), ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE, INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DO PORTO (E2S|P.PORTO), PORTO, PORTUGAL; 2. MESTRADO BIOQUÍMICA EM SAÚDE, E2S|P.PORTO, PORTO, PORTUGAL 3. ÁREA TÉCNICO-CIENTÍFICA CIÊNCIAS QUÍMICAS E DAS BIOMOLÉCULAS, E2S|P.PORTO, PORTO, PORTUGAL; 4. ÁREA TÉCNICO- CIENTÍFICA DE ANATOMIA PATOLÓGICA, CITOLÓGICA E TANATOLÓGICA, E2S|P.PORTO, PORTO, PORTUGAL.

Obesity represents a major public health challenge, being associated with high morbidity, mortality, and significant socioeconomic impact [1]. Consequently, there has been growing interest in the use of natural compounds with potential anti-obesity effects, driven by the perception that these compounds may represent a safer and more accessible alternative to conventional therapies. Considering that scientific evidence regarding their efficacy and safety remains limited [2], the present study aims to analyze the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the Portuguese population regarding the use of natural compounds in obesity management. Following institutional ethical approval, data collection was carried out through an anonymous questionnaire developed on the Microsoft Forms platform and disseminated online through the academic community of E2S|IPP. The questionnaire includes questions designed to obtain information on sociodemographic variables, patterns of use, perceptions of efficacy and safety, level of knowledge about natural compounds, and the occurrence of adverse effects. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS v31 to explore possible associations between variables. To date, 683 individuals have participated in the study, the majority being female (79%), with the 45–65 age group (40%) being the most represented. The results show that 52% of participants reported having heard about natural compounds used for weight loss, while approximately 10% reported using them, with the most common being Conjugated Linoleic Acid, Berberine, and Caffeine. Among individuals who reported use, 7% indicated the occurrence of adverse effects associated with consumption. The data obtained contribute to a better understanding of population behaviors and perceptions regarding natural compounds, fostering the development of new educational strategies and promoting more informed, safe, and evidence-based use.

KEYWORDS: *obesity; natural compounds; survey; health literacy; risk perception*

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