

# CORDEL LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSION IN THE IMMUNIZATION PROCESS: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

*LITERATURA DE CORDEL COMO FERRAMENTA DE INCLUSÃO NO PROCESSO DE IMUNIZAÇÃO:  
RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA*

Isabelly Regina Bezerra de Albuquerque Cortez<sup>1</sup>, Nayza Lorryanny de Brito Pereira<sup>1</sup>, Nayhara Carlla de Brito Pereira<sup>1</sup>, Pedro Augusto Figueirôa Sobreira Filho<sup>1</sup>, Tharcia Kiara Beserra de Oliveira<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Students at Faculdade de Medicina de Olinda, Brazil. | <sup>2</sup> Professor at Faculdade de Medicina de Olinda, Brazil.

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the initiative *Literatura de cordel como ferramenta de inclusão no processo de imunização* (Cordel Literature as a Tool in the Vaccination Process) conducted at the basic health unit (BHU) Rio Doce V. This study emphasized the importance of vaccination in preventing diseases and reducing mortality, using literature as a creative and informal way to disseminate information. This knowledge is likely to be reproduced in other scenarios, respecting popular culture. This study was developed at the BHU with healthcare workers, internship preceptors, and the local community. Initially, a draft was made outlining the content to be presented, the logistics for sharing information with the community, and how the material would be best absorbed, considering that the primary target audience was families and children attending the BHU. An adhesive panel was created to present that a vaccinated family is protected against diseases, framed within the Northeastern cultural context. Both the local community and the healthcare workers were significantly engaged with the study, as evidenced by reports of BHU workers. The present study aimed to promote health and prevention in the community and implement strategies to educate the local community with cultural, clear, and accessible content. This study was conducted out of a commitment to improving the community and contributing to strengthening the Unified Health System (SUS).

**Keywords:** Disease prevention; Health promotion; Medicine in the literature; Public health; Vaccines; Vaccine coverage

## RESUMO

O objetivo foi descrever a ação “literatura de cordel como ferramenta no processo de imunização”, realizada na Unidade Básica de Saúde (UBS) Rio Doce V. A atividade visou enfatizar a importância da vacinação na prevenção de doenças e na diminuição da mortalidade, utilizando a literatura de cordel para propagar a informação, baseando-se em linguagem informal e criativa. Espera-se que a experiência possa ser reproduzida em outros cenários, respeitando a cultura da região. O projeto foi desenvolvido na UBS Rio Doce V e contou com a participação dos funcionários, do preceptor do campo de estágio e da comunidade local. A priori, foi realizado um esboço do que seria apresentado na UBS em questão, da logística do compartilhamento da informação para a comunidade e de como o conteúdo seria absorvido, visto que o público principal era composto pelas famílias e pelas crianças da unidade. Com o cordel produzido, foi criado um painel adesivo que fazia alusão à ideia de que uma família vacinada está protegida contra doenças. Observou-se que a população e a equipe de saúde tiveram adesão significativa ao projeto, como podemos demonstrar a partir dos relatos da equipe profissional atuante na UBS. O presente estudo almejou desempenhar a função de promoção e prevenção da saúde na comunidade e implantar estratégias voltadas para a instrução da comunidade local com conteúdos culturais, claros e acessíveis. Estamos convictos de que desempenhamos essa atividade movidos pelo comprometimento com a melhoria da comunidade, contribuindo para a construção e o fortalecimento do Sistema Único de Saúde.

**Palavras-chave:** Prevenção de doenças; Promoção de saúde; Medicina na literatura; Saúde pública; Vacinas; Cobertura vacinal

## INTRODUCTION

For many years, vaccination played a key role in controlling the spread of infections and eradicating diseases in the community. Due to its proven effectiveness in promoting public health<sup>1</sup>, many investments are made in vaccination programs.

Despite maintaining high coverage rates for a long time and being internationally acclaimed for vaccination programs, Brazil has seen a recent decline in the performance and resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Based on data from the Ministry of Health, the Institute of Health Policy Studies (IEPS) revealed that at least half of Brazilian municipalities failed to meet the target of the National Immunization Program (NIP). Between 2015 and 2019, coverage rates for all vaccines declined significantly, dropping from levels above the 90% or 95% targets in 2015 to well below the recommended thresholds by 2019<sup>2</sup>.

Among the strategies used for socio-educational approaches to vaccination are discussion groups, lectures, seminars, artistic activities, and literature. Artistic methods are one of the main strategies for promoting health-related knowledge in vulnerable populations. Literature can foster creative capacity, expand the understanding of human needs, and play a historically significant role in health-related studies, facilitating interactions between culture and sociolinguistic analysis.<sup>4,5</sup>

In this context, a strategy was developed to educate the local community, promote health, and prevent diseases. Clear and accessible content that emphasized the importance of vaccination and updated the vaccine records were used. The chosen tool was cordel literature, a traditional poetic form employed to enhance understanding and increase adherence to vaccination.

In mass communication campaigns, media resources are used to transmit the intended message effectively. The incorporation of regional elements, represented by the cordel literature, creates an identity-based connection important for the reception and retention of the message.<sup>6,7</sup>

Cordel literature is a popular rhymed poetry from northeastern Brazil, the birthplace of distinguished representatives of this genre.<sup>8,9</sup> It is tradition-

nally printed in small booklets and often displayed hanging from strings, which is typically represented by woodcut illustrations.

Due to the cultural significance, cordel literature was chosen to create a representative mirror in which readers can see themselves reflected in the message through language, imagery, and cultural references evoking shared memories and identity.

Nowadays, technological approaches have gained increasing importance in healthcare, a topic that is being widely debated and integrated into society.<sup>8</sup>

This study aimed to describe the initiative *Literatura de cordel como ferramenta de inclusão no processo de imunização* (Cordel Literature as a Tool in the Vaccination Process), conducted at the basic health unit (BHU) Rio Doce V, emphasizing the role of vaccination in preventing disease and reducing mortality. In the initiative, popular literature was used to spread information through an informal and creative language.

## METHODS AND RESULTS

Aiming to highlight the benefits of immunization, the study was designed with cordel literature to encourage vaccination.

The study was developed at the BHU Rio Doce V with healthcare workers, internship preceptors, and the local community. Initially, a draft outlined the content to be presented at the BHU, the logistics for sharing information, and how the material would be best absorbed, considering that the targeted audience was families and children attending the BHU.

To ensure maximum integration with the cultural language, a cordel was created addressing vaccination campaigns promoted by the NIP, which was later distributed to the local community (Figure 1).

In addition, an adhesive panel was created to present the idea that a vaccinated family is protected against diseases within the northeastern cultural context (Figure 2). A display board made of burlap and sisal twine was also assembled with printed copies, allowing easy access for community members (Figure 2). All materials used were designed and provided by the healthcare team.



**Figure 1.** Cordel booklets prepared for distribution at the BHU Rio Doce V.



**Figure 2.** Adhesive panel and string display made of burlap and sisal twine, created for the initiative.



## SPACE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To enhance the impact of the study, the BHU was decorated with materials evoking northeastern culture (Figure 3). Individualized explanations were also provided, fostering unique interactions with each patient and aiming to emphasize the importan-

ce of keeping vaccination records up to date. The initiative was directed toward the entire community present at the BHU, all of whom received the cordel related to the theme.



**Figure 3.** Decoration of the BHU Rio Doce V with materials referencing northeastern culture, created by the healthcare team.

Following the planning phase and the definition of objectives, students set out to put theory into practice. The goal was to generate a positive impact within the new context of the epidemiological surveillance system, increasing vaccination rates.

Both the local community and healthcare workers showed significant engagement with the study, evidenced by reports from workers at the BHU.

In the waiting room, patients were curious and appreciated having access to a special piece of literature to read and take home to perpetuate such an important message.

The healthcare team was enthusiastic about the creative approach used to capture the attention of the community and welcomed the space to inform the population regarding routine vaccination.

The results were positive and highly relevant for the entire community. The northeastern culture as a central element caught the attention of the community and healthcare workers, facilitating the dissemination of information and education. Students involved in the initiative expressed deep gratitude and fulfillment upon witnessing the practical effects

of the theoretical proposition of this study.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Working in primary healthcare proved to be a direct, fast, and accessible way of interacting with the community. During the development of the study, the aim was to establish a long-term initiative that would contribute to the environment of the BHU. The decorations aimed to highlight the northeastern culture, which was achieved using rustic elements. With dynamic presentations, the cordel was distributed to the community during the vaccination day organized by the BHU. The cordel contained essential information from the NIP and was written in accessible language to ensure the entire community understood it.

Due to the illustrations, the cordel also attracted the attention of children, who were the primary target audience.

To extend the duration of the study, a display board featuring the cordel was incorporated into the decoration and regularly restored with additional copies to ensure broader reach and effectiveness for the population.

The study was treated as a primary commitment, along with the regular participation and frequent replacement of cordel booklets on the display board. Accordingly, the need for continued work with the BHU and the community was acknowledged.

During this period, limitations and qualities of the daily activities in the BHU were observed. This study aimed to improve the community and contribute to the development and strengthening of the Unified Health System (SUS).

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