

Social Thermalism in Brazilian Public Health: perception of the public health secretaries from municipalities with thermal water sources

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Given the immense Brazilian potential, social thermalism are little explored practice as a factor for health promotion. In 2006, the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices was created in Brazil, where the Social Thermalism was included as observatories in public health. However, there are still no results materialized in social thermalism in the country, which means that there is a need for more research, not only about the mineralogical characteristics of mineral-medicinal and thermal water sources, but also public management mechanisms for that thermalism is incorporated into the national health system as a structured practice and beneficial to the quality of community life. Within this scenario, the objective of this study was focused on identifying the perception of members of the Municipal Health Secretaries in ten municipalities, in Santa Catarina estate - south of Brazil, thermal source retainers. The present investigation was done in a qualitative and descriptive way by means of surveys recorded and later transcribed. This initiative was approved by the Ethics Committee of the State Secretariat of Health of Santa Catarina. In the ten cities, two managers in charge of primary health care and ten municipal health secretaries were interviewed about their level of knowledge about balneotherapy, the probability of developing the activity in their region and the possible challenges for implementing social thermalism as an local activity. The data obtained through the surveys were worked through the content analysis and the results were segregated into three categories: (1) General knowledge of managers and secretaries of health about social hydrotherapy; (2) potential for insertion / development of social thermalism in the local public health system; and (3) Difficulties in the implementation of social thermalism as a structured practice in the public health system.

With that, it was diagnosed that even if there is a lack of known about this practice, all the interviewees agree that the inclusion of thermalism in the structure of public health will be able to provide preventive and strengthening treatment to the quality of life of citizens. However, the constant change of the Municipal Health

Secretaries in the ten municipalities was identified as the main weakness for the continuous structuring and financial contribution of the state in the potential projects.