CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND KNOWLEDGE ON BAHIAN RECONCAVO ABOUT FUNCTIONAL FOODS

**Ferlando Lima Santos;** Edleuza Oliveira Silva; Adna Oliveira Barbosa; Laize Andrade Fiúza Dias; Vinicius Oliveira de Miranda Pereira; Adeilse Costa Souza; Joseane Oliveira Silva.

Center for Health Sciences, Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia– UFRB, Avenida Carlos Amaral 1015, Cajuibeiro, 44570-000 Santo Antônio de Jesus, Bahia, Brazil.

Recently, customers are even more concerned about their health and the search for healthy food has been the motivation for those who want a better life quality. In this context, the objective of this study was to evaluate the perception and popular knowledge about functional foods in the region of Bahian Recôncavo. Data collection was performed by means of semi-structured interview in the two largest cities in the region, and Santo Antonio de Jesus Cruz das Almas. We interviewed 325 individuals, 51.4% female and 48.6% male. Most of the interviewed, 44.3%, stood in the age group 18-30 years, 43.1% had completed high school and 24.9% attended only elementary school. 92.9% of the interviewed moderately or strongly believe that some foods and drinks can promote health benefits, however, 69.2% had never heard the term "Functional Foods". On the other hand, from the individuals who claimed to know these products, only 34% attributed disease prevention, particularly constipation and chronic diseases to them, however, 24% were unable to reply correctly on the meaning of functional foods. Given this reality, one realizes that despite the growing demand by adopting healthy eating habits, the population of this region of Bahia still unaware of the true meaning of these products. Thus, health communication could increase awareness and encourage consumption of functional foods, working in health promotion and disease prevention.