AROMATIC HERBS: USES AND BENEFITS

BACKGROUND

The aromatic herbs are plants usually of small dimensions that present several proprieties and uses in the Portuguese cuisine. They are often characterized by their specific smell which provides a different aroma to the dishes, enhancing their flavour and colour.

AIM

This study intends to specify the several benefits of the use of aromatic herbs in the confection of daily meals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was conducted a review process, recurring to scientific databases using the terms: “aromatic herbs”, “bioactive compounds”, “benefits”, “confection” and “nutrition values”. And then, selected the most relevant articles found.

RESULTS

They play an important role in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, due to their antioxidant proprieties. (4)

Oregano

Rich in phenolic compounds, lipids, fatty acids, flavonoids and anthocyanins. (4)

Thyme

Mainly composed by thymol, showing antifungal and antimicrobial effects. (4)

Antioxidant

It also has several antioxidant proprieties that help reduce the action of free radical present in the human metabolism and responsible for degenerative diseases. (3)

Antimicrobial activity in essentials oils. (2)

Ethanol extracts of Thymus vulgaris L. showed antifungal and antimicrobial effects. (1)

Oregano

Used in the Moroccan medicine as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. (6)

Thyme

It's an important source of antiaggregant polyphenols that decreases platelet aggregation, consequently decreasing thrombosis. (1)

Parsley

Used in many medical proposes as an antimicrobial, antiseptical, digestive and sedative. (4)

Its an important action as an antimicrobial, antiseptical, digestive and sedative. (4)

Antitumoral activity in essentials oils. (2)

The use of aromatic herbs in reducing salt intake in the diet may have a double and positive influence on health, both by reducing the amount of salt in food and by the beneficial properties that they present for health. However, to maintain their properties, herbs should only be added to foods at the end of their preparation, since most of their properties are lost by the action of heat. (1)

CONCLUSION

The use of aromatic herbs can have a strongly positive influence on the reduction of salt consumption in our diet and also add beneficial properties to it. According to the PHYSA study, the average consumption of salt in the Portuguese adult population is 10.7 g / day, well above the daily maximum recommended by the World Health Organization (5 g / day). The high consumption of salt is strongly related to arterial hypertension, so proper nutrition is one of the fundamental pillars, both in prevention and in its treatment. This reinforces the need for changes in behaviour, both as regards the consumer’s requirement to provide foods with lower salt content, or with regard to less domestic salt use by using of aromatic herbs. (9)

REFERENCES