
Preface

The Escola Paulista de Medicina/Universidade Federal de São Paulo (EPM/UNIFESP), Brazil, has developed health assistance activities and teaching and research programs among indigenous people since 1965. It is a Brazilian university with considerable experience in that area.

The Brazil Unified Health System (SUS) calls for universal care mainly in primary care. The health of indigenous people has received special attention from the Ministry of Health, and special Indigenous Sanitary Districts have been established throughout the territory of Brazil.

Professionals who work in the field of indigenous health should see that this subsystem works and is viable. The Xingu Project from EPM/UNIFESP has worked intensively on raising awareness of and training professionals to work on the health of indigenous people. The extension courses for interested health students are a part of this work.

Proposals regarding knowledge of and intervention in health problems affecting indigenous communities are ambitious. They involve holding a continuous dialogue with different cultures in order to understand their worldviews, their healing systems, and their conceptions of health and disease. In addition, we need to develop actions in primary care to minimize the negative health impact arising from contact of indigenous peoples with the broader society and to adapt health intervention models in application to different indigenous groups and their social realities and lifestyles. Brazil is home to 230 indigenous peoples speaking 180 languages, a group of about 600,000 people. This is the main action field of the Xingu Project.

Among the various activities related to the overall health of these people, the experience and photographic documentation recorded over the years have allowed the authors and contributors to gather rich materials related to some skin diseases that affect these populations. This *Dermatological Atlas of Indigenous People* is a result of the work conducted over several years. We have as our goal the production of material that sheds light on the clinical-dermatological aspects and the culture of these peoples. The therapeutic management of various clinical situations described here has always strived to incorporate the best and latest clinical practices, but whenever possible taking into account their economic viability because many indigenous populations live in less-developed countries.

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