The Ministry of Health launched the Family Health Program (FHP) in 1994, with the aim of establishing comprehensive primary health care for families and communities. The Public Health School of Ceará has been applying problem-based learning as the instructional method for the training of the family health teams. The importance of this method and the possibility of applying it in the implementation of a new and effective approach to the continuing education of Brazilian health professionals are emphasized.

literature search.\textsuperscript{3} PBL, a methodology linked to the teaching of Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM), is found in various distinguished international medical schools, and it has just been implemented in some Brazilian educational institutions.

To date, a number of FHTs has been trained with PBL at the PHSC, involving facilitators who also are faculty members from the Federal University of Ceará School of Medicine. It is known that PBL methodology increases the participants’ ability to solve real-life problems, compared with traditional instruction, as well as improving interpersonal skills, the ability to reason, and the self-motivation to learn.\textsuperscript{4} These achievements are crucial for the FHTs, since they are composed of professionals who are already coping with real situations, developing group activities, and living far from formal health educational centers.

PHSC has also applied PBL to other types of training, such as that aimed at health managers in Ceará municipalities. Indeed, a statewide problem-based EBM training programme is currently being proposed, in cooperation with the medical associations and the Federal University of Ceará School of Medicine.

Thus, this experience from Ceará suggests that PBL would be an important strategy in the implementation of a new and effective educational approach for health professionals in Brazil.

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RESUMO

O Ministério da Saúde lançou em 1994 o Programa Saúde da Família (PSF), objetivando estabelecer atenção primária ampla para famílias e comunidades. Equipes do PSF vêm sendo treinadas pela Escola de Saúde Pública do Ceará através de Metodologia de Aprendizagem Baseada em Problemas (Problem-based Learning), ressaltando-se aqui a importância deste método e a possibilidade de aplicá-lo como estratégia de implementação de um novo e efetivo processo de educação dos profissionais de saúde no Brasil.