

SUMMARY OF THESIS

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION FOR EXHIBITION TO PLASTER DUST: IMPACTS IN THE POPULATION'S HEALTH

Pernambuco's plaster industry is responsible for 90% of the country's gypsum production. It is estimated that this plaster activity, constituted by mining calcination companies and of prefabricated concrete blocks factories generate 12 thousand jobs and is the main economical activity of the Interior of the Araripe. The research aimed to know the socio-environmental characteristics of the area and to esteem the prevalence of the population's health complaints. It is a referred morbidity study that analyzed the population of the main plaster district of the municipal district of Araripina-PE through a representative sample of the population of 2,486 inhabitants. A direct observation of the geographical landscape, through techniques existing in the area, took place as well as a research in secondary data. The socio-environmental impacts observed were: intensification of Savanna vegetation degradation, used as main energy source in the process of plaster calcinations; rural exodus provoked by the substitution of old areas of agricultural production for gypsum plowings; air, soil and waters pollution caused by the calcination process and destination of the solid residues of the productive processes; and in health. It was

observed that 30% of the population has breathing complaints, cough being the main manifestation (28%). 43% referred to ocular conjunctive irritation and 37% to nose bleeding. The main references of lung repercussions of the population exposed to plaster dust were: pneumonia (27%); bronchitis (14%); and asthma (10%). The conclusion reached was that there are evidences that the environmental plaster dust pollution is an unleashing factor of disturbances in the superior and inferior breathing system and in the ocular and nasal mucous membrane. It is an important public health problem in the area. For a better understanding of the health effects and to propose prevention measures it is necessary to institute an environmental and epidemic surveillance focused on this regional problem.

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