

# MAPPING VULNERABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXTS OF HEALTH PROMOTION IN RURAL VALLEY JAGUARIBE, CEARÁ, BRASIL, 2011.

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**Background and Aims:** Brazil has long adopted an agro-export model, intensifying agricultural expansion in all regions. The impacts are felt differently in each region, since those cover quite diverse biomes. At the national level, the northeast region is one of the poorest in the country yet has recently attracted investments for the purpose of promoting economic development. Such investments are focused on fruit production for export resulting in critical social and environmental impacts.

**Methods:** The present project that looks into the epidemiological impact of pesticide contamination, held a workshop with communities focusing on the mapping of socio-environmental vulnerability and approaches to environmental health promotion. Through the use of a matrix, each community reported on aspects in their environment that they considered as promoting and, or threatening their lives and their territories. As such, they were able to record their perceptions and observations concerning changes taking place in their territories pointing out a variety of related factors. To facilitate the presentation of these perceptions the community drew a map depicting the dynamics of community life, featuring the main factors present in the matrix.

**Results:** The results showed a perception of communities about the changes that are happening in the territory. Hence, the process of agricultural modernization leads a re-structuring of the social space contributing to the deterioration of various social, economic, cultural and environmental factors which impact the health of residents and workers. An increase in domestic and urban violence, alcoholism, drug use and prostitution are other conditions that ensued. Other situations that were cited were work-related accidents, cases of poisoning, acute and chronic exposure to pesticides by the workers.

**Conclusions:** Strengthening production models that include an agro-ecological perspective was presented as a possible route to social and environmental sustainability and to the promotion of human and environmental health in the region.