ABSTRACT - HUMAN BIOLOGY

QUILOMBOLA ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM THE STATE OF PARÁ, AMAZON, BRAZIL: LIFE CONDITIONS, RACISM AND THE COVID PANDEMIC CONTEXT

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The Quilombolas are remaining communities of black Africans that lived in Brazil as slaves, who live by subsistence agriculture, artisanal fisheries, extraction of forest products, selling products in local markets. Their life conditions have not been investigated properly but it is known they are vulnerable as any other groups from the Amazon region. We investigated the nutritional status and social determinants of health of 124 elderly individuals (60 to 98 years old, 63 women, 61 men) from six communities in the State of Pará, Brazil, through anthropometric, health measurements and interviews. Men (31,67%) and women (28,57%) are overweight, but 29% of women are obese. Many relate chronic diseases, which can be aggravated by the poor environmental conditions of housing, no sewage system, unappropriated water consumption, food insecurity, lack of education and health access. Women reported not going to the doctors due to medical violence and racism. During the Covid 19 pandemic, this population has gone through several helplessness

situations, as underreporting cases, land conflicts that resulted in many assassinations and no access to the Brazilian government emergency basic income, contributing for a significant impact in the local economy. Elderly people are the most vulnerable and Quilombola communities are creating prevention strategies (folk medicine, traditional gardening, and others) and discussing protection and basic care measures with governmental and non-governmental bodies, but these actions require the involvement and understanding of society and various bodies at the municipal, state and federal levels to guarantee a minimum of dignity regarding these historically denied populations.