

The diseases of our great-great-great...grandparents: Paleoparasitology in childhood

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Paleoparasitology is the science that studies parasites in ancient material, and therefore discoveries made in this field help understand evolution of life on Earth. One of Paleoparasitology's lines of research focuses on the studies about the groups of our ancestors and different aspects of their lives, allowing us to comprehend more about the history of humankind. Despite the great Brazilian academic production in this field, there is still lack of circulation of this scientific knowledge to society. Dissemination of science has been gaining space, especially with children and young adults that have potential to unleash scientific vocations. Moreover, it can also be part of the development of a critical citizen conscientious of the importance of science in their everyday lives. Therefore, the objective of this study is to divulge Paleoparasitology to infants through a science "fair" where didactic materials with adapted language were presented in order to induce imagination and interest of these children. Two classes of 20 five-year old children were selected with the supervision of a Pedagogue at the Unidade Municipal de Educação Infantil Rosalda Paim, Niterói-RJ. A children's story was presented with the title "The life of our great-great-great...grandparents" as a starting point. The children's story became an illustrated book, and in order to establish the knowledge presented at the book, several games were proposed with elements and characters that appeared in the story (i.e. the archaeologist, paleoparasitologist, rupestrian paintings, coprolites, extinct animals, paleoindian, worms, and others). The games included puzzles, memory game, mini excavation and questions and answers. We also produced an activity book that was donated to each child with the purpose to be taken home and exchange the information with their relatives. We were able to notice the potential in spreading science through fiction elements for the infant public. This theme catalyzed imagination and creativity in children, especially because it involved elements that stimulate these abilities at this age. Due to these results, this "scientific fair" will be offered to others units of Infant Education in Niterói - RJ. We concluded that the methodology used was efficient in spreading scientific knowledge encouraging in these children the fondness and allurements for science, especially for Paleoparasitology.

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