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**ILEX PARAGUARIENSIS USE AND AFFECTIVE SYMPTOMS: ¿IS THERE AN ASSOCIATION?**

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**Introduction:** Yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis* (IP)) is a plant widely consumed in South America as a hot (mate) or cold infusion beverage (tereré). During the last years, there was an increasing interest in its health properties supported by a growing scientific evidence. These studies showed that the IP could have hepatoprotective, hypocholesterolemic, diuretic and antioxidant properties. Furthermore it showed to be a nervous system stimulant and protectant (1). Recently, there were reports about its *in vitro* potential to inhibit the Monoamine oxidase (MAO) which can have effects on mood state (2).

**Objectives:** Exploratory research to study possible associations between the use of IP and mood symptoms.

**Method:** An observational cross-sectional study was conducted by an online survey in Paraguayan population through an invitation. The survey collected data information about sociodemographic conditions, substance use (including IP), Spielberg's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and PHQ-9 scale for depressive symptoms. A descriptive and multiple linear regression analysis of the data was performed.

**Results:** 300 subjects accepted the invitation and information was obtained of about 76% of them. The sample mean age (SD) was 27 (7,4), most of them females (61,6%) and with university studies (66,1%). The 86% of the sample consumed IP regularly and 56% daily. Only a 3,5% reported previous psychiatric history. A significant relationship was observed between the use of IP and daily alcohol ( $p=0,022$ ). No relevant associations were found concerning IP use and anxiety trait-state or depressive symptoms after adjusting for the use of coffee, tea, alcohol and others sociodemographic variables.

**Conclusions:** No significant associations were found in the sample studied between the use of IP and state-trait anxiety or depressive symptoms. Although, given the frequency of its use, the association with alcohol consumption and its potential clinical applications, more and bigger studies might be necessary.