

Short Report on the Career of Physiotherapy in Brazil

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Short Communication

The career of Physiotherapy in Brazil began in the late 1960's. Since then, it has expanded greatly, being recognized both as an educational course and as a higher level profession that is respected by the population and other health professionals. In almost fifty years of this profession, Physiotherapy has moved from being offered as a technical qualification to the provision of postgraduate training including internships, different specializations, Master's degrees, and doctorates, which have resulted in international recognition.

Following relevant legislation, graduate programs in Physiotherapy (Bachelor's degrees) must adhere to the so-called National Curricular Guidelines (NCGs) that govern courses, aligning quality professional training, achieved through theory and practice, with generalist training based on skills and competences. The generalist has the knowledge to act at all levels of health care NCGs for Physiotherapy have existed since 2001 and are undergoing revision, with new guidelines to be implemented in the near future [1].

In Brazil, physiotherapy was initially based in hospitals, focusing on the treatment of patients already in the hospitalized phase, currently under the conditions of the Unified Health System (SUS), a health system designed to respond to disease outbreaks and administer hospital and general health services. Following implementation of the Family Health Strategy Program (ESF, composed of a multiprofessional team that has at least a general practitioner or family health specialist or family and community physician, generalist nurse or family health specialist, auxiliary or nursing technician and agents Community health systems (ACS)), together with the Family Health Support Center (NASE, that is a team composed of professionals from different areas of knowledge who must act in an integrated manner and support the professionals of the Family Health Teams, the Primary Care Teams for specific populations), Brazilian physiotherapists began to be included in teams for the provision of basic care, focusing on the promotion of health and prevention of disease. The presence of physiotherapists among the professionals that constitute support teams represents an important development, despite the fact that such inclusion still remains relatively incipient [2,3].

Although, in the beginning, physiotherapy was mostly focused on the treatment of orthopedic problems, other major areas have become incorporated as specializations of the profession. As health science has evolved, physiotherapy professionals can increasingly choose to pursue their careers in many different areas, both major and specialized, some traditional and others more recent. These areas include orthopedics and traumatology, cardiology, pneumology, neurology, rheumatology, gynecology and obstetrics, urology, geriatrics, sports, ergonomics,

dermato-functional physiotherapy, and oncology, among others. Some of these are traditionally the areas of medicine and other health professions. At the same time, Physiotherapy courses in Brazil can contribute to training of the general practitioner, providing a broad perspective of strategies for health promotion (policies, plans and programs with actions aimed at preventing people from exposing themselves to factors that are determinant and determinant of diseases), as well as the ability to evaluate cases, perform physiotherapeutic diagnosis, and prescribe treatment for individuals of all ages [4].

There are currently around 1000 undergraduate individuals' courses in Physiotherapy in the country. The curriculum (course program) must be a minimum of 4000 hours in a five-year period, and all courses must pass the assessment screening procedures established by the Federal (the vast majority) and/or State governments. In addition, since 1997, Master's degrees in Physical Therapy have become available, giving the profession greater visibility both within the country and abroad. PhD courses came next, since 2000, contributing further to this recognition and leading to partnerships between Brazil and other countries. An important point is that Brazil has received students from other countries, mainly from Central and South America, as well as from the African continent, wishing to obtain Brazilian qualifications. At the same time, Brazilian students have visited countries on all the continents in order to conduct joint studies and enhance their professional knowledge.

Despite being a relatively recent profession, Physiotherapy has achieved considerable success in bringing its professionals into the labor market, in accordance with the needs of the population, and can be attributed to the integrated approach involving teaching, research, and extension work (specializations), all of which are vital for the training of a competent physiotherapist.

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