



Original Article


Professional profile of egresses from the physiotherapy course of a University Center in Montes Claros – MG

Perfil profissional dos egressos do curso de fisioterapia de um Centro Universitário em Montes Claros – MG

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Abstract

Objective: to analyze the professional profile of graduates of the Physiotherapy course at a university center in Montes Claros - MG. **Materials and Methods:** this is a cross-sectional study with a quantitative approach, the population studied was 51 graduates from the Physiotherapy course at a university center in Montes Claros - MG. Data were collected through an online semi-structured questionnaire. **Results:** the results show that the female gender (82.3%) is predominant among the graduates, with the average age range of 26 to 30 years (58.8%). The results also demonstrate that 35.3% of the graduates still do not practice the profession and among the active ones, 51.0% are autonomous and the main areas of expertise are trauma-orthopedics (33.3%) and aesthetics (24.2%). **Conclusion:** the profile of the graduates shows that it is made up more of women and working in the trauma-orthopedic area. Despite being diversified, the market is still difficult for recent graduates in terms of obtaining a stable job and even guaranteeing a salary according to class.

Keywords: Graduates. Physiotherapists. Professional Profile. Health.

Resumo

Objetivo: analisar o perfil profissional dos egressos do curso de Fisioterapia de um centro universitário em Montes Claros – MG. **Materiais e Métodos:** trata-se de uma pesquisa do tipo transversal, de abordagem quantitativa. A população estudada corresponde a 51 egressos do curso de Fisioterapia de um centro universitário em Montes Claros - MG. Os dados foram coletados através de questionário semiestruturado online. **Resultados:** os resultados mostram que o sexo feminino (82,3%) é predominante entre os egressos, com a média de faixa etária de 26 a 30 anos (58,8%). Os resultados demonstram ainda que 35,3% dos egressos ainda não exercem a profissão e, entre os atuantes, 51,0% são autônomos e as principais áreas de atuação são traumato-ortopedia (33,3%) e estética (24,2%). **Conclusão:** o perfil dos egressos mostra que é constituído mais por mulheres e atuando na área da traumato-ortopédica. Apesar de diversificado, o mercado ainda se mostra difícil para os recém-formados no que tange à obtenção de emprego estável e que, inclusive, garanta um salário de acordo com a classe.

Palavras-chave: Egressos. Fisioterapeutas. Perfil Profissional. Saúde.

INTRODUCTION

In the last century, there was a significant growth in higher education in Brazil, explained by the economic growth and the students' desire for higher education with the possibility of scholarships and financing, both in the form of private contracts and facilitated government plans¹. Among the courses in demand, Physical Therapy presents itself as an economically favorable alternative among the health courses, due to its employment potential¹

However, after graduation, the labor market imposes several obstacles and uncertainties to the graduate, especially in variables such as salary, employability, unemployment, income, and skills, triggering an economic and labor instability for physical therapists^{1,2}.

These uncertainties cause malleability of labor rights in all categories and professionals. Regarding graduates in the labor market, the best opportunities for insertion are found in small cities, due to less competition, since in large urban centers there is evidence of saturation^{1,3}.

It is also possible to verify the lack of information these graduates have regarding the challenges involved in the transition process from university to the job market, as well as regarding the institutions that regulate the profession, their norms and laws⁴.

Besides the basic knowledge of the labor market, it is essential for the professional to be qualified, either through graduate studies or through specific and language courses, thus optimizing his/her resume and with the possibility of working in other countries. Another strategy is to invest in areas of activity that are little explored^{1,5}.

In the beginning of the professional career, the quality of life of the physical therapist is reduced due to

the demands and overloads of the work associated to stress. Even with the Law n° 8,856, from March 1st, 1994, that establishes the working hours for Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists at 30 hours a week, the excess of working hours reduces the opportunity for support, causing dissatisfaction, tension, and other health problems, and can lead to injuries, such as psychic disorders, psychosomatic illnesses, and fatigue^{4,5}.

Thus, the objective of this study is to analyze the professional profile of graduates of the Physical Therapy course at a university center in Montes Claros - MG

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross-sectional research, with a quantitative approach, carried out with graduates from the Physical Therapy course of a private university center in the city of Montes Claros - Minas Gerais.

The sample was made up of 51 graduates from the Physical Therapy course, of both genders, aged 18 to 60 years, with up to one year of training and who agreed to participate voluntarily and filled out the informed consent form sent via e-mail and a message exchange application. For the non-probability sampling process, the technique known as (*Snowball Sampling*), described by Baldin; Munhoz⁶, was used.

The instrument used for data collection was a semi-structured questionnaire adapted from Freitas⁷. For the application of the instrument, we used the electronic tool Google Drive Forms, which addressed the interviewee's characteristics, such as age, gender, salary income, education time, and area of work. All data were collected individually online.

The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics with the help of the statistical program *Statistical Package for the Social Science*

(SPSS® version 25.0) and results presented as means and frequencies.

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Associação Educativa do Brasil, under opinion number 3,924,578, and all the criteria required by resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council that regulates research with human beings were respected.

RESULTS

The profile of physical therapy graduates is predominantly female (82.3%), with an average age between 26 and 30 years (58.8%). It is also observed that 35.3% of graduates reported having no income from physical therapy and, among those who have income from their profession, the highest percentage (31.4%) receives a minimum wage. Complementing this profile, it was noted that 62.7% have up to six months of training (Table 1).

This study showed that among the 51 interviewees, 29 (56.9%) were registered with the Regional Council of Physical Therapy (CREFITO) and 22 (43.1%) were not. It was also evidenced that, among these graduates, the largest portion works autonomously (51%) and only 13.7% with a regime that follows the Labor Laws (CLT) (Table 2) and it is worth noting that, among these professionals, all are registered in CREFITO.

Among the difficulties encountered in entering the job market, the graduates complain about high demand, low pay, and lack of opportunity (all options with 41.2%) (Table 2).

Among the 33 graduates who work, 33.3% (11) are in the Trauma and Orthopedics area, followed by 24.2% (8) who work in Aesthetics (24.2%) (Figure 1).

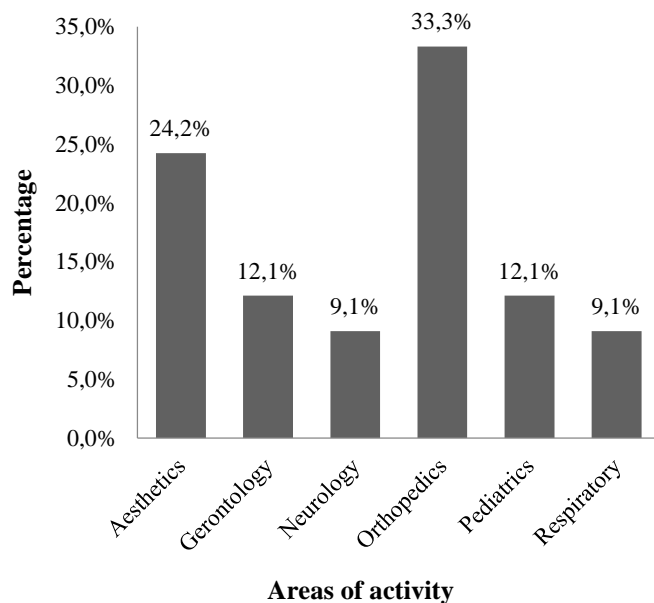
Table 1 - Age, gender, salary income and time of graduation from the Physical Therapy course of a University Center in Montes Claros, MG, Brazil.

Variables	n	%
Age		
10,5	19	37.3
26 to 30 years old	30	58.8
31 to 40 years old	2	3.9
Gender		
Female	42	82.3
Male	9	17.7
Income		
Less than 1 minimum wage	4	7.8
1 minimum wage	16	31.4
Up to 2 minimum wages	3	5.9
Above 2 minimum wages	10	19.6
No income	18	35.3
Training Time		
0 to 6 months	39	62.7
7 to 12 months	12	37.3

Table 2 - Work status and difficulties in entering the labor market by egresses from the Physical Therapy course at a University Center in Montes Claros, MG, Brazil.

Variables	n	%
Work Regime		
Freelance professional	26	51.0
CLT	7	13.7
Not working	18	35.3
Difficulties in entering the labor market		
High demand	6	11.8
Low remuneration	11	21.6
Lack of opportunity	13	25.5
All options	21	41.2

Figure 1 - Area of practice of physical therapy graduates from a university center in Montes Claros, MG, Brazil.



DISCUSSION

It was observed, in this study, the predominance of female graduates aged 26 to 30 years. In another similar study conducted in Teresina - PI, the profile of physical therapy graduates also shows a predominance of females (67%), however, the age range of higher prevalence is 18 to 25 years (56%)⁸. Women are increasingly seeking qualification, constituting the largest portion of vacancies in undergraduate courses⁹. We also observe that the professional structure of a society is extremely dynamic. It is possible to identify some signs that highlight an upward shift in physical therapy, since it was born as a salaried profession, predominantly female, subordinated to male medical authority and without a clearly defined field of action¹⁰.

Regarding income from physical therapy, a smaller fraction reported having none. Among those who have income from the profession, the prevalent salary range was one minimum wage. In a similar study, Salgado *et al.*¹¹ analyzed a large percentage (57.8%) of physiotherapists that receive between one and three minimum wages monthly, observing results different

from those of this study. The differences in professional remuneration are associated with differences in the modalities of hiring and in regional differences¹².

For this study, professionals with up to one year of training were invited to participate, and a higher percentage of Physical therapists with up to six months of training was observed. Meneghetti¹³ verified that 76.2% of the physiotherapists interviewed had up to one year of training. These authors also concluded that the professionals, even with a short time of training, feel safe to act, based on the knowledge and techniques acquired during their graduation, which shows the crucial participation of the universities in carrying out a good process of training the professional.

Another important factor to consider is the registration of the professional with CREFITO. In the Montes Claros - MG region, physical therapists must be enrolled in CREFITO of the 4th region (CREFITO-4). It was found in this study that, among the 51 interviewees, most had an active CREFITO membership. CREFITO, through its regulations and guidelines, helps physiotherapists regarding their conduct, rights, and duties, so that they can carry out their professional attitudes humanely and honestly¹⁴.

The type of employment relationship is a factor that impacts CREFITO registration in the beginning of the career, since after graduation, it is a period of adaptation, lack of financial resources in which many need to work as freelancers¹⁵. Thus, this study showed that among the graduates, most work independently, and it is worth mentioning that among these professionals, all are registered in CREFITO. Thus, it is noted that, among the self-employed, there are four who work without being registered in the proper professional council. For Vendrusculo and Schetinger¹⁰, recently graduated physiotherapy professionals present some aspects like those of other professions characterized by

autonomous practice, such as medicine, dentistry, and law, for example.

The high demand, low remuneration and lack of opportunity were the complaints reported by graduates that made it difficult to enter the labor market. In another study, most of the participants (32.9%) reported that they did not find it difficult to get their first job/job¹⁵, which was not reported by this study, since 35.3% are still unemployed. Among the difficulties, those authors found the variable job with compatible salary as the most reported difficulty (23.7%), configuring this item as the main difficulty to get into the job market¹⁵. Câmara and Santos¹⁶ reported that good development with teachers and participation in internships can contribute to bringing the new graduate closer to the labor market.

Decree Law number 938, from October 13, 1969, which provides for the professions of physical therapist and occupational therapist and other provisions, grants the physical therapist to work in various areas/specialties. In this regard, a significant portion of the participants stated that they work in the Trauma and Orthopedics area. This is the area that has the largest number of physical therapists working, due to its formation with contents that are predominantly from the rehabilitative curative model^{17,18}.

The physical therapist is a professional who works in health promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, that is, his work aims to preserve, maintain or restore the functional capacity of the body, aiming to improve the quality of life. Since health is a state that involves physical, mental, and social balance, the physical therapist's work should have an interaction among these systems to lead to a possible professional achievement in an effective and pleasant manner⁵.

CONCLUSION

The profile of the graduates shows that it is made up more of women and that they work in the Trauma-orthopedic area. Despite being diversified, the market is still difficult for new graduates to find a stable job that guarantees a salary in accordance with the class. Newly graduated Physical Therapists should also look for courses and specializations to add more knowledge and diversify their possibilities of work.

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