

Training in Dentistry has experienced some challenges during the last 20 years that continue to this day: how to train a generalist health professional, with solid ethical and scientific training, based on active learning methodologies and including the Brazilian Unified Health System as a privileged field to develop their general and specific competences.

As a response to this search, the thematic section “Training in SUS: integration of collective health and clinic” provides different experiences, constructs, approaches and research demonstrating a significant contribution to the defense of citizenship represented by the Unified Health System, emphasizing the essentiality of articulation of health services with higher education institutions in this path.

It was possible to identify the enriching different experiences and proposals developed throughout Brazil, considering the expressive participation of professors, students, health professionals and social agents who gathered to write scientific papers, which provided the privilege of delivering high-quality scientific production as a contribution to this discussion.

The diversity of themes and methodologies employed indicate how the Unified Health System has an endless potential to contribute to learning, based on the search for solutions to the main oral health problems of our population.

It is also important to point out that the current thematic section took place in a health moment characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic, marked as a period of great sanitary, political and economic instability that demanded the transformation of face-to-face activities into remote practices as an initial challenge for all higher education institutions. This change brought the challenge of the construction of training that continued the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes, with emphasis on communication, leadership and health management skills, besides creativity and ability to manage situations that could never be foreseen before the pandemic.

Looking at health training mediated by communication and information technologies allowed other arrangements for the acquisition of skills and development of competences, both for students and for the faculty of higher education institutions.

As a result of the several papers that addressed this context, it is concluded that training during the pandemic is a phenomenon that must be analyzed in its pedagogical, cultural, economic and social dimensions, among others. It should be noted that, while everyone was waiting for the end of the exceptional period, scientific and technological production maintained its rhythm, impacting by new knowledge and pedagogical alternatives provided by information and communication technologies. These experiences, developed in the microcosm of training in Dentistry, were addressed in this thematic section and responded to a trans-pandemic training by innovating, reviewing concepts, providing other tools and re-creating paths.

The negative effects are present in all fields of social life, and society as a whole has experienced and continues grieving the loss of beloved ones, financial difficulties, high living costs, among other problems of the last two years. There are many ruptures in this social fabric, which was already so worn and has worsened during the pandemic.

Dropout in higher education (as well as in other educational levels) is one of the results to be studied, and the balance of this period will be measured and analyzed over the next few years, but some skills and competences can already be noticed after these months of Covid-19 pandemic: health training remained attentive to the new scenario, incorporated technologies, restructured the dialogue between professors and students. There was loss of human warmth, intersubjective exchange and of the careful look of those who teach and those who learn. However, health training did not retreat to its pragmatism and searched for other paths, either pedagogical or social, for the development of skills and competences to achieve its main objective: taking care of people, valuing the Unified Health System, and producing science.

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