Profile of Dental graduates of the State University of Paraíba

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the sociodemographic profile of Dental graduates of the State University of Paraiba (UEPB), in 2016, the reasons that led them to choose Dentistry, satisfaction with the course, as well as their perspectives and postgraduate works. The sample was composed of 60 students, who filled a semi-structured questionnaire divided into three blocks: sociodemographic profile of students; degree course in Dentistry; professional and postgraduate perspectives. The results showed a predominance of females, young, single, childless, originally from Paraíba, with monthly family income from 3 to 5 minimum wages and without the presence of dentists in the family. Their parents have either finished high school or higher education and are currently working. More than 90% were satisfied for choosing Dentistry. The reasons that made them choose this profession were mainly professional performance and personal satisfaction, followed by the interest of working in the community. Approximately 40% of students reported failure and few reported time off from college, consequently not attending the courses for a semester or more. Approximately 80% of students evaluated the course as good or excellent and considered the graduation time of five years as appropriate. Students intend to work both in public and private services and do postgraduate studies. The findings made it possible to identify the profile of Dental graduates at UEPB, in 2016. It is recommended the permanent accompaniment of trainees as an essential instrument for the monitoring of students and their performance in the curriculum development.

Descriptors: Dentistry. Education, Higher. Students, Dental.

1 INTRODUCTION

Brazilian Dentistry has presented changes both in the sector of new technologies and in the direction that the professional must take in the face of difficulties of the labor market¹. The insertion of oral health professionals at the different levels of health care and health care management in Brazil reinforces the need for reflection on professional practice with responsibility and ethics in the production of care².

The role of the university, especially within the Health Area, is to develop skills and produce professionals capable of meeting the demands of the population, seeking the social relevance of professional performance², thus eliminating the trend of predominantly elitist training, with little concern for social and health promotion, which had been previously observed³. The National Curricular Guidelines (DNC) in Dentistry state that the new professional must have generalist, critical, humanistic and reflexive education, allowing working at distinct levels of attention of the health system⁴. The Dental school should, therefore, aim at the formation of human resources focused on the epidemiological profile of the population and the health system in force in Brazil².

The transformations in the Brazilian academic scenario occurred in the last decades, causing changes in the higher education student's profile. These transformations were mainly due to the expansion of vacancies and creation of new public institutions and policies of insertion of students belonging to traditionally disadvantaged social groups⁵. Affirmative Action Programs, for example, aim to combat inequality regarding educational opportunities with the aim of increasing the access of minority groups to higher education⁶.

Studies have shown the profile and expectations of Dental students about the profession^{1,7-10}. The motivations that lead them to choose this profession are related to their vision of Dentistry, the possibilities of acting in the labor market and the necessity or not of social commitment as health professionals⁷. Vocation or professional achievement has been shown to be the main reason for choosing Dentistry^{1,8,9,11} as well as the economic reasons because students consider that the profession offers financial stability¹².

The view of undergraduates about the labor market shows that most of them believe that there is room for specialized professionals¹¹. The market demand of a constantly improving professional explains the need to create graduate courses^{1,8-10}. There is also high pretension of associating practices in the public and private sectors, probably due to factors related to Brazilian public services, which generally pay low wages, but offer job security and also allow workers to engage in private practice¹⁰.

The State University of Paraíba (UEPB) currently offers two Dentistry courses, the first located in the city of Campina Grande / PB (Campus I), created in 1971, which has a workload of 4505 hours and offers 30 places per semester. The second, located in the city of Araruna / PB (Campus VIII), was created in 2010, with the workload of 4220 hours and 40 places offered per semester. Both require minimum training time of 10 and maximum of 15 semesters. They have policies of monitoring and research activities and extension projects^{13,14}.

In order to bring teaching, research and extension activities closer together and better articulate them, the UEPB Undergraduate Courses Regiment opens the possibility that the activities carried out in extension research projects will count as a supervised internship or as complementary activity of a scientificacademic-cultural nature for undergraduate students^{13,14}. Currently, the Department of Dentistry - Campus I - develops 23 projects and six extension programs and six research lines¹³; the Department of Dentistry - Campus VIII presents three extension lines and three research lines¹⁴.

UEPB offers 100% of its higher-level positions through the Unified Selection System (SiSU) of the Ministry of Education (MEC), which uses the candidate's score obtained in the National High School Exam (ENEM) as an evaluation process^{13, 14}.

Most studies on the training of dentists in Brazil reveal the need for changes in training, in curricula, in education towards social needs and greater teaching-service integration^{3,7}. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen in this field of discussion to better understand issues related to the profile of Dental students, their motivations and professional expectations.

The present study proposes to analyze the sociodemographic profile of UEPB Dental graduates regularly enrolled in the last year of the course, the reasons that led them to choose Dentistry, appreciation of the course, as well as the perspectives of employment and postgraduate activities.

2 METHODS

This is a descriptive observational crosssectional study. The study universe corresponded to all students regularly enrolled in the last or second semester of the UEPB Dentistry courses (n = 99), expected to graduate in 2016.1 or 2016.2. Those who were present at the time of questionnaire application and who agreed to participate in the study by signing the Informed Consent Term (TCLE) were included.

For data collection, a semi-structured questionnaire developed by Bockmann et al. (2014) ⁷ and adequate to the objectives of the present study was used. The questionnaire was divided into three blocks: sociodemographic profile of students, undergraduate Dentistry course, professional perspectives and postgraduate activities. The application of the questionnaire took place at UEPB classrooms and students took about 35 minutes to respond.

The analysis of information collected was performed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences statistical software (SPSS) for Windows version 17.0. The frequency distributions of the investigated variables were calculated. A descriptive analysis of data was performed, and the results were grouped into tables and graphs.

The conduction of the study followed the

principles governed by the national and international norms that regulate researches involving human beings. The research was approved by the UEPB Research Ethics Committee (CAAE: 56416916.5.0000.5187).

3 RESULTS

Of the 99 students enrolled in the last semesters of UEPB Dentistry courses, 16 were excluded because they were not present during questionnaire application and 23 refused to participate. Thus, 60 students were enrolled in the study by signing the TCLE, with a response rate of 59.4%. Of these, the majority were women (69.81%), young (75.17% aged 21-25 years), unmarried (93.33%), childless (93.33%), from Paraíba, with monthly family income from 3 to 5 minimum wages (41.66%) and no family members working as dentists (75.00%) (table 1).

Regarding family variables, most parents were married (75.00%), had high school or higher education (36.67% of fathers with complete high school and 36.67% of mothers with complete higher education) and were working at the moment of questionnaire application (68.33% of fathers and 55.00% of mothers). For 88.34% of students, fathers were those responsible for the family income (table 1).

Most students passed the first entrance exam (58.33%), and 68.23% entered the course between ages of 17 and 20. Dentistry at UEPB was the first undergraduate course for 58.33% of students, and 96.43% of them were satisfied with the option (table 2).

The main reasons that led them to choose Dentistry were a personal and professional achievement (43), followed by the interest in acting in the community (12), safety and stability in the future (10), or influence of dentists, relatives, and friends (7). For these students, the main purpose of Dentistry is oral health prevention and maintenance (43), as well as promoting hygiene and aesthetics (40) or prevention and treatment (39).

Variables		n	%
Sex	Female	37	69.81
	Male	23	30.19
Age (years)	21 - 25	45	75.17
	26 - 29	15	24.83
Marital status	Single	56	93.33
	Married	4	6.67
Children?	Yes	4	6.67
	No	56	93.33
State of origin	Paraíba	54	90.00
	Others	6	10.00
Family income (MW)*	1 - 2	15	25.00
	3 - 5	25	41.66
	More than 5	7	11.67
	Information not available	13	21.67
A family member is a dentist?	Yes, parents or brothers	7	25.00
	No	45	75.00
Marital status of parents	Married	45	75.00
	Divorced	9	15.00
	Single	3	5.00
	Widower	3	5.00
Paternal schooling	Incomplete elementary school	11	18.33
	Complete elementary school	8	13.33
	Complete high school	22	36.67
	Complete higher education	16	26.67
	Illiterate	1	1.67
	Information not available	2	3.33
Maternal schooling	Incomplete elementary school	9	15.00
	Complete elementary school	9	15.00
	Complete high school	19	31.66
	Complete higher education	22	36.67
	Illiterate	1	1.67
Labor market: father	Working	41	68.33
	Unemployed	5	8.33
	Others	14	23.34
Labor market: mother	Working	33	55.00
	Unemployed	15	25.00
	Others	12	20.00
Responsible for family income	Father and Mother	53	88.34
	Husband or wife	3	5.00
	Others	4	6.66
	TOTAL	60	100.00

Table 1. Distribution of Dent	al graduates a	ccording to the so	ociodemographic	characterization

MW: minimum wages. * Minimum wage value at the time of questionnaire application: R\$ 880,00.

Variables	n	%
Number of entrance exams performed		
Approval in the first exam	35	58.33
Two or more exams	22	36.67
Information not available	3	5.00
Admission age in the course (years)		
17-20 years	41	68.23
More than 20 years	19	31.77
First undergraduate course		
Yes	35	58.33
No	25	41.67
Satisfaction with the course		
Satisfied	58	96.43
Unsatisfied	2	3.77
TOTAL	60	100.00

Table 2. Distribution of Dental graduates in relation to data of the Dental course

Several students reported at least one failure throughout the course (43.33%) and only 3.33% reported having time off from college for some period for gestation (1.67%) or other personal reasons (1.67%). About 94.50% of students stated that they had carried out monitoring, extension and/or research projects during graduation and 70.45% received scholarships for the activity. Students evaluated the undergraduate Dentistry course of UEPB as good (48.33%), excellent (31.67%), regular (18.33%) or poor (1.67%). Graduation time (five years) was considered adequate by 85.00% of students.

After graduation, more than half of students (68.33%) intend to work in both public and private service. Of those, when asked if they would dedicate 40 hours a week to work together with an Oral Health Team in the Family Health Strategy, 97.50% said yes (table 3).

The reasons that would lead students to

work in the private sector were professional autonomy (34) and better working conditions (29). Regarding the option of working in the public and private sectors, the reasons given by students were safe income, experience in the first years of their profession to set up an office or to form a clientele (48) and greater professional experience (35). After graduation, the expectation of financial return for most students (41.67%) was 6 to 10 minimum wages (from R\$ 5.280,00 to R\$ 8.800,00).

Approximately 96.67% intend to take post-graduate courses, especially specialization courses (66.67%), in a period of up to 2 years (78.33%) after graduation (table 3).

Some of the students showed interest in specializing in more than one area of Dentistry 58.33%, while 41.67% indicated only one area of interest. Among the most cited areas are Prosthesis (24), Implant Dentistry (24), Endodontics (18) and Orthodontics (18).

Variables	n	%
Employment Expectation		
Only in the public service	1	1.67
Only in the private service	1	1.67
Public and private	41	68.33
In the university (teaching)	15	25.00
Information not available	2	3.33
Work in the family health strategy (40 hours)		
Intends to	40	97.50
Does not intend to	1	2.50
Post-graduation activities		
Yes	58	96.67
No	2	3.33
How far do you intend to continue qualification		
Post-graduation (specialization)	40	66.67
Post-graduation (Master and Doctoral	16	26.67
degree)		
Does not intend to qualify	2	3.33
Information not available	2	3.33
Period of time for postgraduate		
Up to 1 year after graduation	45	75.00
Up to 2 years after graduation	2	3.33
More than 2 years after graduation	10	16.67
Information not available	7	11.67
TOTAL	60	100.00

Table 3. Distribution of Dental graduates regarding employment and postgraduate activities

4 DISCUSSION

Students who participated in the survey were mostly women, young, single, childless and from the same state of origin as the institution. These same characteristics were identified in other studies on the profile of Dental students in Brazil^{1,6,7,9,15}.

During its historical trajectory, Dentistry was characterized as a typically masculine profession. However, it has been currently undergone an increasing process of feminization ¹⁶. In the present study, female students comprised 69.81% of participants, and this feminization in Dentistry, also highlighted by other authors, is a phenomenon observed in several other professions^{1,7,10,17-21}. In general, the predominance of women in Dentistry can be observed since the end of the 90s, and about 40 years ago, the profession could be considered eminently masculine, since 90% of professionals were male²².

The increase in the number of women has also been observed in Brazilian universities, in which they represent the majority of higher education students in the country¹⁶. The term feminization in the labor market usually refers to a significant growth of the female population in some professions that historically were performed by men, such as Medicine and Dentistry¹⁸. The female professionalization, begun in the nineteenth century, was related to the traditional feminine roles, that is, women are linked to caring, educating and serving, understood as a gift or vocation²³.

In a study on the profile of Dental graduates in 2014 in the state of Bahia, the authors corroborate this trend. According to the authors, there was a predominance of females among students of the five educational institutions participating in the research¹⁹.

Regarding the age of students, the fact that they were young may be related to the age at which they entered the course (68.23% aged 17-20 years), and few reported taking time off from college for some period (3.33%). Regarding marital status, it was observed that the majority were single, reflecting a tendency of the Brazilian population to marry later, prioritizing the construction of professional formation and insertion into the labor market².

Regarding the socioeconomic status of families, the majority earn between 3 and 5 minimum wages (41.66%), similar to that observed by other authors^{1,9}. However, this value was lower than that found in a study where students had better socioeconomic status⁶. It was also observed that parents have higher education and/or high school level and are inserted in the labor market. These data may be related to the low age of students, since the good socioeconomic status of parents allows students to dedicate themselves to studies during high school and prepare for the college entrance examination, without having to divide their time between work and studies.

Many students (94.50%) reported having carried out monitoring, extension and/or research projects during graduation, and 70.45% had scholarships funded by these institutional programs. The same was identified in a study with entering students and graduates of the Faculty of Dentistry of Araraquara, where 51.2% of graduates received scholarships during the course²⁴. A dynamic and interactive cycle in which research improves and produces new knowledge, which is disseminated through teaching and extension, makes these three pillars university formation become of to complementary and interdependent, acting systemically. The quality and success of professionals trained by universities depend, to a great extent, on the level of interaction and articulation of these three pillars of knowledge²⁵.

According to participants, the option for Dentistry as a profession was mainly determined by personal and professional achievement, in agreement with other authors^{1,26}. Participants also reported interest in acting in the community, safety and stability in the future and the influence of dentists, relatives, and friends. The presence of dentists in the family was observed in 25% of graduating students. However, a study in Pernambuco pointed as the main reason for choosing Dentistry the identification with the profession⁹.

In 2015, it was observed in the Federal University of Santa Catarina that the main motivation that led students to choose Dentistry was the admiration for the profession, and the following motivations were vocation, autonomy that the profession offers, influence of someone in the family, prestige and being a rewarding profession²⁷.

When asked about the main purpose of Dentistry, students evidenced oral health prevention and maintenance, promote hygiene and esthetics and prevention and treatment. These data seem to be in accordance with the proposal of UEPB Dentistry courses, which is the formation of egress with the profile of a generalist professional, with social sensitivity and technical competence capable of providing comprehensive humanized attention^{13,14}. Similar findings were observed in Dental graduates of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul⁷.

Regarding course satisfaction, most students from the last semester of the UEPB Dentistry courses were satisfied with their choice, as reported by other studies¹⁸, and evaluated the course as good or excellent. Most also considered the five-year graduation time as suitable for the training of the dental surgeon.

In the UEPB, more than half of students (68.33%) said they wanted to work in both public and private services after graduation. This intention to reconcile work in the public service with the private service was also found by other authors ²⁶. It is noteworthy that in the Federal University of Paraíba, in 2010, this percentage reached 88.4%²⁸.

Exclusive private practice is no longer a reality for most graduates. Such situation may have been influenced by the critical and necessary changes related to education and health policies in the country^{7,29,30}. However, a study carried out at the Federal University of Campina Grande in 2015 showed that 137 university students (66.6%) wanted to be autonomous in private offices²¹, a result also observed by other authors at the Federal University of Santa Catarina²⁷.

Historically, graduation in Dentistry in Brazil was based on a self-sufficient model, of transmission of contents and practices, without interlocution with the needs of society. As a consequence, dentists were trained with a fragile view to legitimize personal conflicts and social situations. The crisis in the liberal market and the inclusion of this professional in the Family Health Strategy program has created a new labor market in the reality of the Unified Health System (SUS). In this sense, the DCN for the Dentistry course implemented in 2002 proposed changes in the training profile of this professional, aiming at a re-signification of its performance and the development of better resolubility of SUS³¹.

The teaching of Dentistry, from the DCN, began to consider the social needs of the country, based on more human social relations and preparing professionals to be trained for the work within SUS, that is, a qualified professional, guided by evidence-based education, well-trained and committed to health equity^{3,32}.

It should be stressed that the reasons that led most students to choose to work in both public and private sectors, were safe income, experience in the first years of profession until setting up an office or forming a clientele and greater professional experience, similar to results found in students from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in 2014⁷.

themselves Students identified as workers of a Family Health Team, with 40hour workweek. This perception about the labor market may have been influenced by the Pedagogical Project of the Dental Course, which offers as a learning scenario stages supervised in SUS, in its various levels of attention, aiming to develop skills and abilities for teamwork, seeking to develop individual clinical activities and actions with operating groups in the social facilities assigned to Family Health units, seeking the integrality of the oral health care². In a study carried out by the Federal University of Ceará, the authors verified that 56% of Dental graduates were included in the public sector³.

Regarding postgraduate activities, almost all UEPB dentists answered affirmatively (96.67%), which is in accordance with other findings in literature^{21,24}. The areas of greatest interest for specialization were Prosthetics / Implant Dentistry, followed by Endodontics and Orthodontics, with Surgery and Dentistry appearing in third place, similarly to results found by other authors²¹. Some studies, however, point to postgraduate courses in Buccomaxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics and Implant Dentistry specialties as being the most desired^{27,32}.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the results presented on the profile of Dental graduates of UEPB refer to a short period of time (one year), and continuous monitoring of these students is necessary to configure this profile at the institution.

In view of the above, it is interesting and necessary to carry out new studies in the field, since the literature on the subject is still scarce, requiring greater knowledge and a deeper understanding in this field of work in order to better understand the issues related to the profile of Dental students, their motivations and professional expectations.

5 CONCLUSION

The results show that Dental graduates at UEPB in 2016 are mainly composed of females, young, single, childless and native of Paraíba, satisfied with the option for Dentistry and with the undergraduate Dentistry course at UEPB, with a view to work in both public and private services, in addition to taking postgraduate courses.

RESUMO

Perfil dos concluintes de Odontologia da Universidade Estadual da Paraíba

O estudo teve como objetivo identificar o perfil sociodemográfico dos estudantes do último ano de Odontologia da Universidade Estadual da Paraíba (UEPB) em 2016, os motivos que os levaram a optar pela Odontologia, a satisfação com o curso, bem como suas perspectivas de trabalho e de pós-graduação. A amostra foi constituída por 60 estudantes, que responderam a um questionário semiestruturado dividido em três blocos: perfil sociodemográfico; curso de graduação em Odontologia; e perspectivas de atuação profissional e de pós-graduação. Os resultados mostraram um predomínio de mulheres, jovens, solteiras, sem filhos, naturais do estado da Paraíba, com renda familiar mensal de 3 a 5 salários mínimos e sem familiares atuando como cirurgiões-dentistas. Seus pais apresentavam ensino médio ou superior completos e estavam inseridos no mercado de trabalho. Mais de 90% mostrou-se satisfeito com a opção pela Odontologia. Os motivos que os levaram a optar pela profissão foram a realização pessoal e profissional, seguida pelo interesse em atuar na comunidade. Cerca de 40% dos estudantes referiram reprovação e poucos referiram trancamento de matrícula no curso por algum período. Cerca de 80% dos estudantes avaliaram o curso como bom ou ótimo e consideram adequado o tempo de graduação de cinco anos. Pretendem trabalhar tanto no serviço público quanto no privado e fazer pós-graduação. Os achados permitiram identificar o perfil do formando em Odontologia da UEPB em 2016. Recomendaacompanhamento permanente se 0 dos formandos como um importante instrumento de monitoramento de seu perfil e do desenvolvimento do currículo.

Descritores: Odontologia. Educação Superior. Estudantes de Odontologia

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