

Profile and professional expectations among senior undergraduate Dental students from Federal University of Santa Catarina.

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ABSTRACT

Brazilian dentistry experiences a time of constant changes. There is a highly competitive market, a growing Public Sector and new challenges for dentists. So, dental education needed to focus on a new academic profile, following the Brazilian National Curricular Guidelines. This study aimed at verifying the profile and professional expectations among fifth-year undergraduate dental students from Santa Catarina Federal University. A cross-sectional research was conducted with last year students, through a social-demographic and professional expectancies questionnaire. From 84 students, 76 participated in this study, resulting in a response rate of 90.48%. The majority of dental students were women (69.74%), white (92.10%), single (88,16%). The average age was 24 years. Most of the students came from private high school institutions (64.47%), the monthly household income of 5-10 minimum wages (39.47%) and did not work (84.21%). Only 18.42% of students entered university through affirmative action. When regarding professional expectancies, 80.26% desires work in public sector, mainly because of stability (42.10%) and as a supplementary income (40.79%). Students mainly expect difficulty because of the highly competitive Market (69.74%). All students reported a willingness to attend postgraduate studies, mainly in Dental Prosthesis (36.84%), Aesthetic Dentistry (34.21%) and Oral Implantology (32.90%). This research enabled to verify a polarized profile among last year undergraduate dental students, who aim to work in public career. The main difficulty expected by students is the highly competitive Market.

Descriptors: Dental Education. Job Market. Dental Staff.

1 INTRODUCTION

Developed to attend human necessities, the Dental field went through many transformations on its work procedures, the growing complexity, brought high impact and changes on the professional profile of the dental surgeon¹.

For a long time, the dentistry working model was turned to the solo practice, technical procedures and healing proposes¹, mainly centered on the private and assistance market. However, after the 80`s decade, can be notice the increase on the professionals` tendency to employment, acceptance of healthcare insurance and accredited institutions².

As the Brazilian background goes, it is possible to notice a complex situation regarding the job market. The country concentrates 20% of all dental surgeons of the world, which are badly arranged geographically, implicating in inequality on job market and difficulties for the population to access dental service³. According to data published by the Federal Dental Board at March of 2016, it is a total of 278.394 dental surgeons registered at the entity⁴.

However, Brazil`s major milestone on the subject relates to the consolidation of the Health Public System, from now on identified as SUS. Born within the Health Reform, SUS was firmed at the 1988`s Federal Constitution, emerging as the healthcare system applicable in the country, being offered as a public service and oriented to promote and protect population health¹.

Also, the creation of the Family Health Program, at 1994, and the inclusion of the Dental Care afterwards on the Family Health Strategy, on the year of 2000, corroborated to form a new structure on the dental surgeon professional practice⁵. Those changes can be notice by the number of dental surgeons inserted on the public healthcare system, estimated to be around 122.125 professionals, according DataSUS⁶.

Therefore, the expansion of the public healthcare practice, the changes on population

characteristics and the own reorientation of the Dentistry implicated on significant changes on the dental surgeon practice, being it associated to the public administration, by accredited institutions, employed or solo practice^{1,3}.

Simultaneous to those changes, also the education environment suffered important modifications, as the inclusion of areas as Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and the scientific methodology, all on the 80`s decade, by the Resolution n. 4 dated of September 3rd of 1982, indicating the increase on the professional education scope⁷.

After the initial changes, a complete reordering of the Dentistry education was needed to be able to adjust to the Brazilian reality and necessities. With the publication of the Brazilian National Curricular Guidelines (NCG), at 2002, the focus was adjusted from its strict characteristics to a more general profile, covering many other skills besides the pure clinical practice.

This way, the NCG was responsible for a process of curricular reforms on the Brazilian courses of Dental Care, with the goal of balance technical excellence and social relevance, transferring the focus from education to the student, in favor to develop professionals with capable profiles to offer a humanized assistance of high quality and with resolute efficacy, including the prioritization of all aspects related to promoting health^{8,9}.

Even though, the analysis of Dentistry college education point to educational insufficiency, when considered its impact on public and collective programs of Dental care¹⁰. Students mirror a vision of the professional practice as oriented and specialized mostly for its own marketing interests¹¹.

The same path was followed by the Santa Catarina Federal University (UFSC) and the Dentistry Graduation Course went through reforms aiming to offer the best possible

preparation for its student, adjusting to the new profile expected of dental care professionals. The new Educational Policy Project that reoriented the course was implemented at 2005, and the beginning of the curricular reform process happened on the first semester of 2007¹².

Inside UFSC institutional context, at 2013 was done a study to identify the socioeconomic student profile. It concluded that most of students were women, of age between 18 and 24 years old, white, single, without children and belonged to B socioeconomic class.¹³.

Considering the changes on dental surgeon professional profile and the current status of the job market, as well as the necessary adjustments on the Dentistry education, this study aimed to describe the profile of UFSC's senior undergraduate students of Dental Care course and their expectation related to professional life.

2 METHODS

This study was conducted after the approval of Santa Catarina State University (UDESC) Ethics Committee of Human Research, in April of 2015, by CAEE 43625815.6.0000.0121 and by statement n° 1.037.414.

It was conducted a descriptive research, of cross-sectional type, applied to students regularly inscribed on 9th and 10th semesters of UFSC's Dentistry Graduation Course.

The data were collected at students' classes, after professor authorization, followed by the introduction of the research goals, its risks and benefits, as well as the data questionnaire. All questions about the study were clarified and it was delivered to the volunteers the Informed Consent Form.

The students which agreed to join the study received the data collection instrument, developed by Machado *et al.*,¹⁴ and adapted by the authors, composed by objective questions about socioeconomic profile information and

expectations for the professional career.

The obtained data were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics measures.

3 RESULTS

At the data collect moment, 84 students were inscribed at the senior year of UFSC's Dentistry Graduation Course. Of those, 76 accepted to join this study, representing a 90.48% rate of response. The analysis of the senior year Dentistry Graduation students profile showed a predominance of women, with 53 students (69.74%), relating to 23 (30.26%) of male students. The age of 24 was the most observed (28.95%), with only 2 students (2.63%) with more than 30 years. The majority declared themselves as white (92.10%), single (88.16%) and without children (97.37%).

Regarding the education, 64.47% of the interviewee affirmed to have attended private High Schools. Besides this, 55.26% of their mothers and 60.52% of their fathers also had College education completed. About household income, 39.47% of the students declared to be between 5 and 10 minimum wages and 17.11% above 15 minimum wages. Also, 84.21% of the students don't work, with all financial necessities being fulfilled by their family, and 14.47% declared to work and receive family financial assistance. From all the students, only 1 (1.32%) reported that didn't receive financial support from the family.

About the entering method at the institution, 18.42% declares to have used affirmative actions, being 10.53% by the vacancy reservation system for the social cut (public schools, social vulnerability situation) and 6.56% by the Ethnic reservation system (black, pardos - brown-skinned - and Indians).

Regarding their residential situation, 35.53% declared to be living with their parents. Meanwhile 27.63% are living with friends, 25% are living alone and only 11.84% with partner

and or children. All participants affirmed to have computer and internet access at their house.

In addition to the senior year student profile, this study also evaluated their professional expectations. Between the participants, 64.47% reported that intend to balance their solo practice with jobs on the public system, while 19.74% desire to work exclusively on solo practice. Only 15.79% of the students want to dedicate exclusively to the public healthcare system.

When asked about the reasons to join a job in the public system, 42.10% of the participants reported the professional stability. The second reason was a supplementary income combined with the solo practice (40.79%). Furthermore, 26.32% of the students affirmed that the public healthcare system it's a good alternative for their first job. Profits were pointed as a reason for only 6.58% of the participants.

Another issue evaluated by this study is the income rate expectation. Among the participants, 47.37% expect a monthly income of 4 to 6 thousand, while 34.21% showed an expectation of more than 6 thousand as monthly income (all on Brazilian currency, Real – R\$). Only 1 (1.31%) had the expectation to receive between 1 to 2 thousand *reais* as monthly income, 6.58% reported expectation between 2 to 3 thousand *reais* and 10.53% between 3 to 4 thousand *reais* per month.

Regarding the difficulties students expect are the high competitiveness of the job market (69.74%), the poor financial status of the population (32.90%) the lack of capable professionals (18.42%) and the community lack of information (11.84%). Only 7.89% of the students affirmed to have no problems expectation for the professional life.

Among the students, 10.53% informed the desire to do another Graduation course, and all

affirmed the interest in continuing their studies after the college graduation. Table 1 shows the concentration of the most interesting fields for the participants.

Regarding the register on the Dentistry Federal Board, 23.70% of the students didn't think about the subject, and 3.95% affirmed that are not interested in registration.

4 DISCUSSION

Even though the Dentistry is known historically as a male occupation, there has been a feminization of the working field in Brazil, where women represent around 51.20% of the dentists^{1,3,14,15}. The female presence at the dental academic field was notice by this study, too.

The dental surgeon profile in Brazil is mainly composed of young age professionals, usually between 26 and 35 years old, showing how early students enter the job market³. UFSC's senior year students are mostly 24 years old, and live this situation, which was also observed in others universities¹⁶. In a study made with first semester students of Dentistry at São Paulo University, it was observed an average age of 19.5 years old, indicating that students enter the course even younger¹⁵. At Rio Grande do Norte Federal University, it was observed that graduated students start fast with the practice¹⁷.

In general, the socioeconomic profile of the senior year students was favorable; its majority has high household income, are provided by their family or another third part, studied on private High Schools, with good knowledge of a second language, relatives with college degree and access to computer and internet. Those conditions were, also, observed on other Universities, where showed a high socioeconomic situation among Dentistry students^{10,11,16}.

Table 1. Distribution of Post-Graduation interest fields for Dentistry, in absolute frequency (n) and relative (%), between senior year students of UFSC`s Dentistry Graduation course.

Concentration Field	N	%
Dental Prosthesis	28	36,84
Aesthetic Dentistry	26	34,21
Oral Implantology	25	32,90
Endodontics	23	30,26
Orthodontics and Facial Orthopedics	18	23,68
Maxillofacial Surgery and Traumatology	14	18,42
Pediatric Dentistry	11	14,47
Periodontology	9	11,84
Collective Health	8	10,53
Radiology	3	3,94
Total	76	100,00

Those characteristics of the student's profile offer as benefit more convenience to develop their activities during the graduation course with exclusive dedication¹⁴. On the other hand, there is a growing debate turned to expand access to the course for classes with socioeconomic indicators less favorable. On this path, UFSC has a selective process with vacancy reserved for affirmative action since 2008, though not even one-third of the participants declared to be benefited by it. At 2016, UFSC started to reserve 50% of its vacancy to affirmative action's candidates, which can change the socioeconomic profile of its students, demanding more attention for the course front the new students profile possibilities, contrasting to the observed polarization.

Relating to the practice itself, it was observed that the expectations showed by the students are a reflection of the new Dentistry scenario, where the progressive inclusion of technology, the specialization, the reduction of private practice, the increase of professional

with jobs on the public system and the incorporation of Dental Care on the Family Health program reinforced the new reality of the professional practice.³.

The majority of the students reported the desire to work on the public system, a fact that can be observed in different researches about the Dentistry students' expectations. They are conscious regarding the professional difficulties and the financial stability of the public job.

From the students that joined the research, 79% wish to work on a public job, on exclusive contract or not. This desire isn't only for UFSC's students, many studies regarding undergraduate students about their professional future found the same result, data collected from the students suggest that they are aware of the professional difficulties and that employment can give them more financial security^{2,16}. At a study done with the Dentistry students of Paraiba Federal University, 76.7% reported interest to balance the public job with private practice, and 16.8% showed exclusive

interest on public service¹⁴. At Pinheiro *et al.*,¹⁷ research, it was observed that only 9% of the graduated professionals were working exclusively on public service.

However, most of the students see the public job as supplementary or a first job opportunity, suggesting that the public job is used as leverage for a practice that is private, solo and with market values. On this perspective, has been done a direct and clear effort for the Dental care education to be turned to the SUS structure needs¹².

In a study done with Dentistry Graduation course students of Pará Federal University, it was reported that most of them saw SUS as a wide range of practice attendance space, with reasonable quality and directed to the population¹⁸.

Relating to the hardships, most of the students expect to find difficulties regarding job market competitiveness and on the population poor financial condition. This issue was, also, observed at Paraíba Federal University, where the students have similar expectations¹⁴. A possible good outcome can be the search for a better distribution of the professional, especially inserting them on the countryside, which would fix the excessive offer of professionals in the cities and the scarcity on more distant regions.

The income expectation showed to be high, especially when compared to dental surgeons income, where 49% of the professional earn between 1 to 3 thousand *reais* per month³, an amount which only 8% of the participants aims to earn, this situation was also observed in other studies¹⁵.

This scenario reinforced that there is a lack of consciousness about the financial reality of the professional life. At the study with graduated professionals of Rio Grande do Norte University, an income between 1.000,00

and 5.400,00 *reais* was declared, even though most of them earned above 3.400,00 *reais*, especially between the ones graduated for more than 8 years¹⁷.

UFSC's Dentistry students desire to continue their education by attending a Post-Graduation course, manifesting this will even without having professional practice. The study of this demand, as well as the possibility of knowledge gaps and skills, are necessary. On the other hand, this situation, which isn't exclusive to UFSC's students, can show an interest in constant updates and improvements¹⁴.

It was, also, observed that clinical and specialized fields as Dental Prosthesis, Aesthetic Dentistry, and Oral Implantology are the ones which arise most of the interest among the students for a Post-Graduation, which are respectively the fifth, the sixth and the ninth field of expertise with more concentration of professionals in Brazil³. In comparison, students of São Paulo University reported high interest for specialization, especially on the Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics and Dental Prosthesis and Oral Implantology field¹⁵.

The demand for Collective Health, however, is still small, considering that the majority wishes to work on it, as well as the advances done for the working field of Dentistry on SUS and the possibilities opened by it on the dentistry job market.

In comparison with a previous study done at the same institution, on the year of 2013, with all Dentistry Graduation course students, was notice the maintenance of the student profile: with the predominance of women, on ages between 18 and 24 years old, with the majority declaring themselves with, single, of A, B1 and B2 socioeconomic classes. Most of the students reported being living with their

parents¹³.

5 CONCLUSIONS

UFSC's Dentistry Graduation course senior year is mostly composed by students of young age, white, women, single and childless, coming from families with good financial situation, without the necessity to work for their own living and able to count with family support. There is an evident polarization, even if observed a change tendency on its profile for the future.

The students majority believe on the public healthcare system as an option for their professional practice, even if only a few had a perspective of doing it exclusively, being the public system a first job option or as a "supplementary income" to the private practice. In general, students desire an average income higher than the reality observed at Santa Catarina State, although there is a worry about the job marketing competitiveness, students long to continue their education through a Post-Graduation program.

RESUMO

Perfil e expectativas profissionais de concluintes do curso de graduação em Odontologia da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

A Odontologia vivencia constantes mudanças, em uma realidade de saturação do mercado, fortalecimento do setor público e novos desafios profissionais. A formação universitária almeja um novo perfil acadêmico, conforme as Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais. Este estudo objetivou verificar o perfil dos estudantes do último ano do Curso de Graduação em Odontologia da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina e suas expectativas profissionais. Um estudo descritivo transversal foi conduzido por meio de um questionário autoaplicável, composto por questões sociodemográficas e sobre a expectativa profissional dos estudantes. De 84 estudantes, 90,48% concordaram em participar do estudo. A amostra foi

majoritariamente composta por estudantes do sexo feminino (69,74%), brancos (92,10%), solteiros (88,16%) e com idade média de 24 anos. Quanto à formação, 64,47% cursaram o ensino médio em escola privada. Renda familiar média de 5 a 10 salários mínimos foi declarada por 39,47% dos participantes e 84,21% afirmaram não trabalhar. Apenas 18,42% dos estudantes ingressaram no curso por meio de ações afirmativas. Em relação às expectativas profissionais, 80,26% querem trabalhar no serviço público, principalmente por estabilidade (42,10%) e renda complementar ao serviço privado (40,79%). A principal dificuldade esperada pelos alunos é a saturação do mercado de trabalho (69,74%). Todos almejam cursar algum tipo de pós-graduação, principalmente nas áreas de Prótese Dentária (36,84%), Dentística (34,21%) e Implantodontia (32,90%). Neste estudo, identificou-se uma tendência às especialidades odontológicas no perfil dos estudantes, embora o emprego público seja almejado pela maioria, além de constante preocupação com a saturação do mercado de trabalho.

Descritores: Educação em Odontologia. Mercado de Trabalho. Recursos Humanos em Odontologia.

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