

What can we learn from Undergraduate Final Projects in Dental Schools? A bibliometric study

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to analyze the scientific production of the undergraduate course in Dentistry at UFSC, by means of a survey of the Final Projects carried out in the first six years of implementation of the new curriculum. A bibliometric analysis of the works defended until 2016 and available on the university library website. The following data were collected: year of publication, research areas, publication format, type of work, approach, method, objective, data collection, research scenarios and submission to Research Ethics Committees. A descriptive analysis was carried out of the 413 papers surveyed, with an average of 68.83 works defended per year. Of the total, 63.68% were categorized in the area of "Dental Specialties", highlighting restorative dentistry with 23%. The area of Oral and Collective Health represented 13% and basic sciences 3%. A total of 84.75% of the Final Reports were performed in the monograph format and 63.20% as "Scientific Research". Of these, 92.34% were of a quantitative approach, 65.90% with the observational method, 61% with descriptive purpose, 70.75% with cross-sectional data, 44.20% developed in "Public Services" and 67% submitted to Research Ethics Committees. It is considered that the profile of scientific production still follows the traditional model of Dentistry, consistent with its historical clinical-surgical-technicist formation, in spite of the changes advocated by the National Curricular Guidelines. It is suggested a planning of this scientific production aimed at a training compatible with the oral health needs of the majority of the Brazilian population.

Descriptors: Research. Education, Higher. Curriculum. Bibliometrics. Dentistry.

1 INTRODUCTION

The undergraduate courses in Brazilian Dentistry have historically trained dentists (TD) to practice their profession in the private market, with a curative and individualized health care profile, associated with a strong aggregation of technological material investment and technical-specialized knowledge. Following the liberal-biomedical model of training, it is based on the fragmentation of contents and on teacher-centered teaching, distancing the academic from the preparation for integral care in oral health (OH)¹. Consistent with this hegemonic model of professional training and performance, scientific research in the area of Dentistry is characterized by a clinical approach focused on specialties². A production that is recent and comes mainly from universities and public graduate programs - accounting for 70% of all Brazilian scientific production³ - placing our country among the most productive in the world⁴.

Public institutions of higher education are constituted on tripod teaching, research and extension, encouraging its members to increase more and more their scientific production, based on the requirements of agencies of evaluation and promotion of academic research⁵. However, research in Dentistry still remains focused mainly on market interests⁶, to the detriment of greater investment in the advances of the Unified Health System (SUS), consistent with the social and epidemiological needs of a large majority of the country's population.

The implementation of the National Curricular Guidelines (NCG) in 2002 sought to modify this historical process of production of science and training in health, stimulating the elaboration of pedagogical projects focused on regional realities, in search of a training that contemplates technical excellence and social relevance⁷. In this sense, the curricular flexibilization promoted by the NCG in the

Dentistry courses allowed modifications in academic formation, meaning a greater freedom of reorganization of the curricula in the sense of overcoming the liberal-biomedical model⁸. Scientific research in OH is assuming a preponderant role in the construction of a new profile of professional training and performance⁷, based on a new model of health care that emphasizes multiprofessional and interdisciplinary relational technologies, with an emphasis on communication between the actors and in the integrality of the attention, from the epidemiological and social necessities².

The elaboration of Concluding Course Works (CCW) is an important tool for the development of this new critical and reflective professional⁹, when the training aims to develop an active professional in the construction of their knowledge, with technical and scientific excellence and also ethical-humanistic. Thus, the CCW is understood not as a mere task required by the pedagogical project of the courses, but as a fundamental achievement to stimulate creativity, lifelong education and academic pursuit for qualified scientific knowledge, from the construction of projects consistent with principles of the NCG¹⁰. The CCW seeks to bring academics closer to the scientific method, from the preparation of monographs, publications and presentations of scientific works in academic events so that they recognize the value of scientific research in professional development¹¹ and also as a social commitment.

In this sense, analyzing the CCW in undergraduate courses in Dentistry makes it possible, besides identifying the profile of academic research, to verify its contribution to the delineation of the directions of scientific research in the academic environment and to perceive the consonance of the courses to the guidelines of the NCG^{3,9,12}. The objective of the present study was

to analyze the scientific production in the undergraduate course in Dentistry of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) related to the CCW produced from the implementation of its last curriculum.

2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present bibliometric study of a quantitative, cross-sectional, exploratory and descriptive trait was carried out based on the CCW of the UFSC undergraduate course in Dentistry defended between the years 2011 and 2016. The data were collected in a public database, available online, on the website of the University Library (UL) of the UFSC, and the titles of the works and the names of their authors were kept confidential, and no direct information was provided to identify them.

The variables surveyed were: title of the work; year of publication; thematic area of work, categorized in "basic sciences", "dental specialties", "Collective Oral Health and related areas" or "Dentistry in general" (this last category included all subjects that did not fit into the other categories); publication format, categorized as "article" or "monograph"; type of work, characterized as "bibliographic review", "scientific research", "clinical case report" or "experience report on extension activity" (the latter two variables were defined according to the modalities allowed by the CCW regulation of the course studied). The papers categorized in scientific research were sub-categorized according to the approach as "quantitative" or "qualitative"; method as "experimental" or "observational"; objective as "exploratory", "descriptive" or "analytical"; data type such as "transverse" or "longitudinal"; and how much submission to the Research Ethics Committee "yes" or "no". In addition to these, the "scenario", categorized

as "public services", "research labs", "literature", "public-private services", "private services" or "public documents" was also raised.

For data collection, a data spreadsheet was elaborated, as well as a previous theoretical calibration, based on the data analysis of some CCWs by the researchers. After the collection, they held a consensus meeting of the data obtained, and the doubts were again discussed for the final categorization and the continuation of the exploratory and descriptive analysis of the data.

3 RESULTS

A total of 413 papers were analyzed on the UFSC UL website. The data collected were summarized in Table 1.

The average number of papers published per year was 69 (± 24), with 2011 being the year with the lowest number of papers (24 CCWs or 5.81%), a year in which only one group presented their papers, and 2014 the year with the highest number (103 CCWs or 24.94%).

The "dental specialties" area was the most frequent, with 263 (63.68%) works, followed by "Dentistry in general" with 82 (19.85%), "Collective Health and related areas" with 54 (13.08%) and the "basic sciences" with 14 (3.39%).

Of the works surveyed, 63 (15.25%) were prepared in a scientific paper format and 350 (84.75%) in monograph format.

As to the type of work performed, 261 (63.20%) were considered "scientific research", 139 (33.66%) "bibliographical reviews", 12 (2.91%) "clinical case reports" and 1 (0,24%) "report of experience in extension activity".

Table 1. Distribution of completed dental course from the UFSC published from 2011 to 2016, by the data collected, Florianópolis / SC

| Variable | n | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| <i>Year of publication</i> | | |
| 2016 | 71 | 17.19% |
| 2015 | 80 | 19.37% |
| 2014 | 103 | 24.94% |
| 2013 | 65 | 15.74% |
| 2012 | 70 | 16.95% |
| 2011 | 24 | 5.81% |
| Total | 413 | 100.00% |
| <i>Research area</i> | | |
| Dental Specialties | 263 | 63.68% |
| Dentistry in general | 82 | 19.85% |
| Collective oral health and related areas | 54 | 13.08% |
| Basic science | 14 | 3.39% |
| Total | 413 | 100.00% |
| <i>Publication format</i> | | |
| Monography | 350 | 84.75% |
| Article | 63 | 15.25% |
| Total | 413 | 100.00% |
| <i>Type of project</i> | | |
| Scientific research | 261 | 63.20% |
| Literature review | 139 | 33.66% |
| Clinical Case Report | 12 | 2.91% |
| Experience report on extension activity | 1 | 0.24% |
| Total | 413 | 100.00% |
| <i>Approach</i> | | |
| Quantitative | 241 | 92.34% |
| Qualitative | 20 | 7.66% |
| Total | 261 | 100.00% |
| <i>Method</i> | | |
| Observational | 171 | 65.51% |
| Experimental | 90 | 34.49% |
| Total | 261 | 100.00% |
| <i>Objective</i> | | |
| Descriptive | 159 | 60.92% |
| Analytical | 100 | 38.31% |
| Exploratory | 2 | 0.77% |
| Total | 261 | 100.00% |
| <i>Data</i> | | |
| Transversal | 177 | 67.82% |
| Longitudinal | 84 | 32.18% |
| Total | 261 | 100.00% |
| <i>Submission to the Research Ethics Committee</i> | | |
| Yes | 205 | 33.00% |
| No | 101 | 67.00% |
| Total | 306 | 100.00% |
| <i>Scenario</i> | | |
| Public services | 130 | 44.22% |
| Research Laboratories | 69 | 23.47% |
| Literature | 39 | 13.27% |
| Public-private services | 28 | 9.52% |
| Private Services | 14 | 4.76% |
| Public Documents | 14 | 4.76% |
| Total | 294 | 100.00% |

Of the 261 papers categorized as scientific research, 241 (92.34%) were of a quantitative approach and 20 (7.66%) of a qualitative approach. Regarding the method employed, 171 (65.51%) were considered observational and 90 (34.49%) were experimental. Regarding the objective, the most frequent was the descriptive study with 159 (60.92%), followed by the analytical study with 100 (38.31%), and the exploratory study with 2 (0.77%). The work with transversal data was the most frequent, with 177 (67.81%), followed by 84 (32.18%) CCWs with longitudinal data.

Of the 306 papers totaled as "scientific research" and "clinical case report" (those requiring ethical evaluation, whenever involving human or animal participation), 205 (67%) were submitted to the Research Ethics Committees with Humans (REC) or to Ethics Committees on Animal Use (ECAU), which corresponds to the sum of the research carried out in "public services", "private", "public-private", and clinical case reports. Of these 205 CCWs submitted to RECs, 63 (30.7%) were prepared in an article format.

The most frequent scenario was the "public services" with 130 (44.22%), followed by "research laboratories" with 69 (23.47%), "literature" with 39 (13.27%), "services" (9.52%), "private services" with 14 (4.76%) and "public documents" with 14 (4.76%).

4 DISCUSSION

From the curricular change that took place in the UFSC Dental School and the consequent compulsion of CCWs for its conclusion, all students had the possibility of greater contact with the construction of scientific knowledge, creating the research to be valued as part of the educational process and reflective in graduation and permanently in professional life. The variability found in the number of papers

published per year reflects the sinuosities of the paths taken by students along the course, as well as the increase of vacancies from 2009 (from 90 to 100 vacancies per year).

The results point out that the valuation of different areas and specialties in the undergraduate course may be related to the students' direct interest and involvement with the curricular subjects, with respect and admiration for the professors or disciplines, and also for the presence and tradition of the post-graduation in the institution, historically aligned with market interests. Thus, the choice of research topics and counselors for the CCW seems to reveal the greater or lesser influence of the unseen curriculum on students and their preferences⁸, especially in relation to technical and clinical areas, in line with the results of other studies^{9,10,12}. This context facilitates the understanding of the predominance of the subject area "dental specialties", also observed in the study on CCWs at the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPeL)⁹, with a higher concentration of CCWs in Dentistry; in the Bahian School of Medicine and Public Health (EBMSP)¹², with most of the works in Stomatology; and at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) in Oral Pathology¹⁰.

In addition, factors that interfere with students' choices can be considered as the presence of post-graduate students in research teams and as CCW co-counselors; the possibility of fellowships for scientific initiation through professors accredited to postgraduate programs; and the greater appreciation of the areas that participate. Leite et al.¹⁰ warn that it may also constitute an interference bias in these choices, the late supply of certain areas in the course, after the beginning of the development of CCWs, since the most researched areas are studied in the initial periods - unconfirmed bias in this work.

The search for the area "Buccal Health

Care and related areas" (13.08%) as the theme for the development of CCWs can be considered low, in particular, by the existence of a transversal axis of Collective Health in the UFSC course and, above all, by the centrality of the area in relation to the social relevance of scientific research developed as a CCW. The historical conformation of the (flexnerian), profession (liberal) and science (biologist) model of education, rooted in the super-specialization focused on clinical activity, centered and shaped by market interests, remains hegemonic in its relationship with the typology of the researches developed. In the same sense, the traditional clinical practice organized around the school hospital, despite its insertion as a SUS service, still resists changes in the transversality of collective health implemented in the new curriculum, keeping the tradition of the clinic fragmented by specialties. These are elements that may explain the low demand for research in this area.

Nonetheless, some researchers point to progress that promotes a new academic reality, in which interest for the social is consolidating as an object of study². In this sense, it would be necessary to question the relationship between the research developed in Dentistry of UFSC and the National Agenda of Priorities in Health Research (ANPPS), considering the insufficient interdisciplinarity between the subjects of the course and those of the Collective Oral Health area¹³, attested by the absence of strategic course planning that prioritizes the execution of research aimed at improving health care for the majority of the population. As a consequence of these choices, the research in Dentistry is maintained, mostly, in the traditional molds.

Although the CCW of the UFSC showed strong production of new knowledge, only 15% were developed in a scientific article format. Since this would allow a faster dissemination of the generated knowledge, it is questioned about

the intentionality of the publication of the knowledge and techniques developed in the CCWs in periodicals, as well as its presentation in scientific events. The short time for the planning and execution of a CCW can result in a diminished perspective of scientific publication, especially considering the current difficulty in publishing scientific articles, not completing the process of production-dissemination-appropriation of knowledge². According to the UFPel study, only 9% of CCWs were published in scientific periodicals⁹, which may represent a serious problem to the process of social appropriation of the knowledge produced. This concern points out that CCWs should not only represent a fulfillment of curricular requirements, but also its scientific and social role, providing effective and accessible answers to the burning problems of the society that finances them. In some courses, such as the Dental Laboratory of EBMS¹², a CCW is compulsorily written in the form of a scientific article, perceiving it as an important result in terms of production, since publication in periodicals, books or annals of congresses expands the diffusion of the generated knowledge⁵.

We observed a predominance of "scientific research" type CCW (63.20%) followed by "bibliographic review" (33.66%) and "clinical case report" (2.91%). In the EBMS study, only 36% of the studies corresponded to "research", 29% to "literature review" and 35% to "case report"¹². In the UFPel, these data were 51%, 21% and 27%, respectively⁹. This majority of works in the type "scientific research" produced at UFSC is a positive aspect, given its potential for producing new scientific knowledge.

Among the works classified as "scientific research", the majority (92.34%) had a "quantitative" approach, which denotes the hegemony of the positivist / neo positivist and

Cartesian current of thought in the construction of knowledge in the course. Qualitative health research, despite its broad potential to respond to problems that are not translatable in numbers, are not solved with epidemiological, experimental and other quantitative based approaches, offering the possibility of producing a deeper understanding of human subjective phenomena present in the processes of health-disease and relational social reality, are still deferred to quantifiable methods. An approach also hampered by the limited space that scientific journals assign to research of this nature, influencing the definition of the project¹⁴.

The works with the development of "observational" research represented practically twice as much "experimental" work, with 65.90% and 34.10%, respectively. Probably because the experimental studies require a longer time, also increasing the chance of contingencies and requiring an earlier start of the undergraduate student to the research projects, even before the contents of research methodology and CCW begin to be worked in the course.

In this sense, the creation of incentive and control mechanisms is suggested to make homogeneous and constant the research process during undergraduation in Dentistry¹⁵, perceiving the scientific productions as an incentive of autonomy, of its ability and initiative to think about reality, and eventually intervene critically and reflexively in it¹⁶. Also, the possibility of early entry into research groups could stimulate student contact and participation in projects, as well as provide a longer time for the development of the work, since the groups have an organization independent of graduation time, besides trajectory and experience in the thematic areas to which they are proposed.

Most of the "scientific research" CCWs analyzed had the objective of "describing" data collected in a "transversal" way. Other studies

have reported similar results^{3,6,10}. This type of research has a low operating cost, analytical simplicity, high descriptive potential and speed in data collection, as well as the ease of representing aspects of a population¹⁰. Taking into consideration the time of three semesters for the conclusion of the CCW according to the course curriculum analyzed, it becomes a good alternative for beginning researchers. On the other hand, they result, in the majority, works of small scientific impact, with greater difficulty of publication.

Regarding the "scenarios", most of the CCWs were performed in "public services". The variety of "research scenarios" found in other "public services" beyond the UFSC, points to a diversity of spaces that include Hospitals, Basic Health Units and Center of Dental Specialties, not being restricted to the CCW carried out within the institution¹⁰. The feasibility of conducting extra-mural research makes it possible to construct a more critical view on the part of the professional future, in addition to the school clinic. In this study, the idea is strengthened that the scientific initiation in the SUS environment is fundamental for the academic to experience what is exposed in the theoretical classes, generating a critical dialogue and developing their autonomy in the learning process¹⁷. The contact of the graduate with the SUS is also necessary in the moment of the research, considering the distance of the experiences in the clinics of the institution with the practical experience in the service network of the health system¹⁸. However, the predominance of the place of study in the "public services" explained by the ease of access, availability of resources and the participation of the guiding teachers in the research, still points to a predominance of the intramural spaces, since among the predominant sites are the Dental Clinic and the University Hospital, both of the

UFSC.

Most of the "scientific research" and "clinical case report" CCWs were submitted to the REC, corroborating the results of another study that indicates the feasibility of carrying out research involving human beings also in the undergraduate degree, despite a shorter time available for research and the scientific unpreparedness of the students, when compared to those performed at the graduate level¹⁰. These data confirm an excellent time of approval of the research projects submitted to RECs.

In addition, REC-approved surveys, prepared in an article format, are above the overall total mean, indicating that despite the predominance of the monograph format, there is a greater chance of publication of the results. Following CNS Resolution 466/2012¹², the researcher and the institutions are committed to submit the results for publication or, therefore, to present a justification for their non-publication, observing the social relevance of the publication of the results, especially those involving human beings. It is considered positive that students carry out researches with human beings and are not restricted to research in the laboratory field, suggesting advances in the traditional emphasis on research materials⁶.

Since the construction of scientific knowledge is a central activity in the contemporary university institution, with results that are reflected in the scientific, social and economic spheres¹⁹, the profile of CCWs undergone in the Dental undergraduation at the UFSC seems to be still fragmented and disarticulated from the social needs and epidemiological aspects of the society in which it is inserted.

5 CONCLUSION

The profile of the scientific production identified in this study corresponds

predominantly to works in the area of "dental specialties", in the format of a "monograph", of the type "scientific research", developed in "public services" with the endorsement of the research ethics committees. The work of "scientific research", in turn, mostly presented a "quantitative" approach, "observational" method with a "descriptive" objective and data collected in a "transversal" way. Thus, there is a gap in relation to the integration process between Dental specialties, general training and Collective Oral Health, by verifying the focus of the work in the areas of "Dental specialties". The CCW profile refers to a still fragmented and disjointed professional model of society and the health system to which it should be inserted.

Facing this reality, the importance of the construction of research projects in the light of the NCG and, especially, the investment in scientific studies committed to the advances in the attention to oral health practiced in the SUS is emphasized. In this sense, the need to develop work integrating the technical and clinical areas with Collective Oral Health is pointed out, based on a strategic institutional planning that takes the ANPPS into consideration.

It is also suggested to expand the possibility of incorporating scholars into research groups already in the beginning of the course, optimizing their opportunities to carry out scientific research, as well as fostering the ethical responsibility of teachers and academics to research on CCWs and the publication of its results, in order to promote the ethics of the research practice.

RESUMO

O que podemos aprender com os Trabalhos de Conclusão de Curso de graduação em Odontologia? Um estudo bibliométrico

Buscou-se analisar a produção científica do curso de graduação em Odontologia da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, por meio do levantamento dos Trabalhos de Conclusão de Curso realizados nos primeiros seis anos de implantação do novo currículo. Realizou-se análise bibliométrica dos trabalhos defendidos até 2016 e disponíveis no *website* da biblioteca universitária. Coletaram-se as variáveis: ano de publicação, áreas de pesquisa, formato da publicação, tipo de trabalho, abordagem, método, objetivo, coleta dos dados, cenários de pesquisa e submissão a Comitês de Ética em Pesquisa. Foi procedida análise descritiva dos 413 trabalhos levantados, sendo em média, 68,83 trabalhos defendidos por ano. Do total, 63,68% foram categorizadas na área de “especialidades odontológicas”, destacando-se a dentística restauradora com 23%. A área de Saúde Bucal Coletiva e afins representou 13% e as “ciências básicas” 3%. Um total de 84,75% dos TCC foram realizados no formato de monografia e 63,20% como “pesquisa científica”. Destes, 92,34% foram de abordagem quantitativa, 65,90% com método observacional, 61% com objetivo descritivo, 70,75% com dados coletados de forma transversal, 67% submetidos a Comitês de Ética em Pesquisa, e 44,20% desenvolvidos em “serviços públicos”. Considera-se que o perfil da produção científica ainda segue o modelo tradicional de Odontologia, coerente com sua histórica formação clínico-cirúrgico-tecnista, a despeito das mudanças preconizadas pelas Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais. Sugere-se um planejamento desta produção científica voltada a uma formação condizente com as necessidades em saúde bucal da maioria da população brasileira.

Descritores: Pesquisa. Educação Superior. Currículo. Bibliometria. Odontologia.

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