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EDITORIAL

Are conducting scientific research and writing articles essential in the training of health professionals?

¿La realización de investigaciones científicas y la redacción de artículos son fundamentales en la formación de los profesionales de la salud?

A realização da pesquisa científica e a escrita de artigos são essenciais na formação de profissionais de saúde?

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There is a multiplicity of views regarding the main competences to be developed in the training of health professionals. The population's expectation about the profile of professionals is different, in some aspects, from that idealized by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Likewise, students may have perceptions about the curriculum structure, which are not the same as those of professionals in activity, the job market, representative societies and class councils, and those of the State itself.

The National Education Council has been trying to establish an effective, articulated and solidary dialogue by approving the National Curriculum Guidelines, and trying to align the diversities of thoughts. However, gaps end up occurring, which are defined by the HEIs in each pedagogical project.

In the Guidelines for Medicine Courses, the "Promotion of Scientific Thought and Support for the Production of New Knowledge" is expressed as one of the key actions[1]. However, when analyzing the curricular matrices of the three hundred and fifty-four Brazilian medical schools, it can be observed that many do not have specific disciplines related to scientific methodology, biostatistics, epidemiology and evidence-based medicine. Even rarer, it has been to find the obligation of a Course Completion Work; which raises the debate whether carrying out scientific research and writing articles are essential in the formation.

Approaching knowledge of health sciences without an understanding of the scientific method is a learning strategy, which certainly makes acquisition and application difficult. Therefore, it is unlikely that at any time during graduation students are contextualized about the generation of knowledge.

Perhaps, what is not clear in the pedagogical projects of many courses is the workload required; and with what quality will the research training be? At this point, the relevance attributed or not to the student's active participation in research projects becomes crucial; therefore, how to consider something fundamental and not make it a requirement?

The question is very old. In a survey carried out at a federal university in 2000, it was observed that 90% of the students were interested in scientific research, 97.3% thought it was important in medical training and 95% would like to have scientific work carried out[2]. Despite this, only a third of them had already participated in scientific work, and only 7% had a scientific medical publication.

In Enade 2007, 39% of students reported regular scientific initiation in their course; 12% declared that there was no regulation and 6.5% reported the existence of scientific initiation without curricular integration; 10.9% said it is not offered and 31% did not know[3].

After fifteen years, unfortunately, the reality has not changed in many medical courses in Brazil. The situation is even worse in other courses in the health area, despite the dedication of professors, who defend undergraduate research.

In a study about the initiation of research in nursing and the importance of monitoring, the authors highlight the great potential of research in being a path to the student's intellectual autonomy, enabling them to exercise their creativity and the construction of critical thinking[4].

Among the obstacles to making participation in research a mandatory curricular component, there is obviously the difficulty of funding. The lack of prioritization of investments to adapt the infrastructure of laboratories and guarantee the presence in the teaching staff of experienced researchers with dedicated and paid time for the scientific initiation activity is in fact an obstacle.

This fact makes the sensu spread that research should be restricted to graduate studies; which should be the training sequence of the student willing to enter the world of research. This thought removes the true role of the postgraduate course of being a stage of intellectual improvement.

By the end of this year, all HEIs in Brazil are preparing to meet the requirements of Resolution No. 7 MEC/CNE/CES, of December 18, 2018, on the curriculum of extension activities, which must comprise minimum, 10% (ten percent) of the total curricular workload[5]. Is it not time to strengthen and expand the discussions on the curricularization of Research? After all, there has always been talk of the inseparability of Education, Research and Extension.

As faithful to science and its evidence, health education researchers are urged to carry out more studies that corroborate the hypothesis: “participation in research and the elaboration of scientific articles at graduation promote better student and professional performance”. Moreover, preferably, one should seek to measure the quality with which one should participate in the curriculum, avoiding an empirical determination, for example: ten percent of the workload.

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