



Submitted on: 03/08/2018
Approved on: 04/08/2018

EDITORIAL

The *Residência Pediátrica* journal and the challenge of continuing medical education

Sidnei Ferreira¹

In the first half of 2018, the Federal Council of Medicine [*Conselho Federal de Medicina* (CFM)] published the fourth edition of *Medical Demography in Brazil* (original title: *Demografia Médica no Brasil*), following the 2011, 2013, and 2015 editions.

The publication features varied analyses that range from undergraduate to graduate, from medical practice to quality of care, and from public policies put into practice to an assessment of their failures and the consequent damage to the health of the population.

Approximately 453,000 physicians are registered with the statewide Regional Councils of Medicine [*Conselhos Regionais de Medicina* (CRMs)] across Brazil. Of those physicians, 62.5% hold one or more specialist titles, while 37.5% have no specialization. That survey considered only the two official paths for a physician to be recognized as a specialist in Brazil: completing a medical residency program or obtaining a degree from a medical specialty society.

There is quite a legion of doctors who have not attended a medical residency program and hold no specialist degree. In most cases, it is likely that this was not by choice but rather because of the lack of opportunity to pursue at least one of these paths.

The difference in the doctor/1,000 inhabitants ratio in the various regions of the country indicates a lack of an effective program to reduce the existing distortions in this distribution, despite the significant increase in the number of physicians.

The national average is 2.18 doctors/1,000 inhabitants, and the North Region has 1.16/1,000, the lowest ratio among the five regions. This region also presents the lowest concentration of pediatricians and the largest proportion of children aged < 5 years, which is counterintuitive. Currently, 68% of Brazilian towns have <1.0 doctor/1,000 inhabitants. The precarious physician distribution/settlement pointed out in the first survey is still observed today.

The Southeast Region presents the largest absolute number of generalists and specialists as well as the largest concentration of pediatricians and medical residency spots. However, the highest specialist/generalist ratios are found in the South and Central-West regions, respectively. Pediatrics, the second largest specialty, has 39,234 specialists, 55% of whom are concentrated in the Southeast.

Despite some areas presenting high ratios (4.35 and 3.55 doctors/1,000 inhabitants in the Federal District and Rio de Janeiro, respectively), which is higher than those of countries such as Canada, Finland, France, and the Netherlands, public healthcare and quality of service to the population are comparable to those of the poorest countries in the world, demonstrating that the number of doctors is not the only factor in adequate healthcare.

Other problems can also be mentioned, such as the indiscriminate opening of medical schools that do not meet the minimal teaching criteria, the systematic reduction of public healthcare investment, the precarious work conditions, and the low remuneration of doctors. A doctor's decision about the region to work is not based on the medical school but rather on the medical residency programs, availability of public service jobs, stable work contracts, and cities whose Human Development Index (HDI) is comparable to that of a developed country. This is why the population, doctors, and other healthcare workers suffer.

For more than a century, the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics [*Sociedade Brasileira de Pediatria* (SBP)] has been ceaselessly working to provide permanent technical, ethical, and humanistic training to pediatricians.

The first pediatrics course in the country was held in 1881, taught by Carlos Artur Moncorvo Figueiredo, who wrote a note suggesting to the Imperial Government the creation of the Children's Clinical Care course in Brazilian medical schools. Fernandes Figueira, one of his students, was the first associate

¹ Secretary-General of the SBP. Member of the Editorial Board of the *Residência Pediátrica* journal.

professor of pediatrics in Brazil, founding the SBP in Rio de Janeiro on July 27, 1910. In 1936, also in Rio de Janeiro, the National Conference on Protection and Assistance to Childhood, considered the first Brazilian Congress of Pediatrics, was held.

In 1947, via a joint initiative by Olinto de Oliveira and Martagão Gesteira, the First Brazilian Day of Childcare and Pediatrics was held; the name of this event was changed in 1965 to Congress. The first medical residency program in pediatrics in the country began in 1949, at the Civil Servants' Hospital (*Hospital dos Servidores do Estado*) in Rio de Janeiro, headed by Luiz Torres Barbosa.

At the time, most physicians had a government job and a private office, with time for rest and study, a scenario that is now completely different.

The *Residência Pediátrica* journal modernly and competently accomplishes this goal. Initiated in 2011, it reached extraordinary numbers in a short time. The journal has 42,000 monthly and 1,400 daily accesses, 10% of which are from abroad. It has 4,323 Brazilian followers on Facebook; 80% are women aged 25–34 years, from 24 states [Rio de Janeiro (30%), SP (15%), RS (12%), MG (3.6%), DF (3%), and PA (2.4%)]. In addition, it has 388 international followers. These figures demonstrate that, despite the serious problems that prevail in the country, such as the distribution of pediatricians and the high rate of non-specialized doctors, the *Residência Pediátrica* journal arouses the interest of those who seek training in pediatrics, advocate for it, and have this wonderful specialty as their trade.