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**Introductory Note**



## Education in health for the physiotherapist: dilemmas in academia education – a study case

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### ABSTRACT

**Problem:** Recognized as a higher education profession in Brazil since 1969, physiotherapy continues to search for recognition and it is still resizing its object of intervention, as well as its technical origin, which has a curative-rehabilitating profile. Despite all the changes since the beginning, it is seen that the curricular structures are still aimed at the initial curative-rehabilitating model. **Justification:** This scenario demonstrates the necessity to reflect upon the way this profession is being taught. **Aim:** To analyze the professional education in physiotherapy from a university located in the city of Niterói, Brazil, in the area of health education towards the professional practice in basic care. **Method:** This is a descriptive study, a case study type, with a qualitative approach. The data will be collected in November 2013 through documents made available through the Internet by the university and from semi-structured interviews with professors and students of the undergraduate course. The analysis of categories will occur from the correlation of the data found.

**Descriptors:** Curriculum; Physiotherapy; Higher Education; Primary Health

## PROBLEM SITUATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Physiotherapy arrived as a higher education profession in Brazil in 1969. Until then, the occupation of a physiotherapist was considered to be at a technical level and the work of this profession was based on the performance of techniques, prescribed by doctors, to rehabilitate injured patients. As the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS, in Portuguese) prioritizes the promotion of health, it is necessary to have a resizing of the object of intervention of physiotherapy. This fact brings up many discussions regarding the work of the professional in the basic care network and a scenario of a new model of intervention. Before, the focus was on damage control, when the disease was present; now, it focuses on damage control combined with actions of education in health. For such changes in mindset, the professional who has recently finished his undergraduate degree must be prepared to acquire new understandings that go beyond the techniques of the profession, overcoming rehabilitation as the only level of performance. Social, curricular, subject, professional, pedagogic and experiential understandings must be considered in the education of the future physiotherapist, with an intention to generate a professional who is capable of generating a transforming praxis<sup>(1)</sup>. Hence, it is fundamental to deepen the reflection about the means and modes of how this higher education has been done. Research that aimed to verify the expectancy of physiotherapy students of the labor market in public health has found that only 44% declared that this was an important area to work in. From this small amount, only 24% knew what were the possible interventions that physiotherapy could do in public health<sup>(2)</sup>. In this sense, it is necessary to think about the formation of the physiotherapist aiming to merge theory and practice, with an objective to a praxis according to the SUS

premises. It is the role of education to promote the internalization of emancipatory values in the subject, considering it as a great challenge to the educational institutions<sup>(3)</sup>.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does the physiotherapy professional learn, during his undergraduate course, the understandings that will work as instruments for the educational practices and actions to be used in basic care? Does the profile of the recently undergraduate physiotherapist match the one proposed by the aims of the undergraduate course? Do the syllabi and the teaching methodologies allow the student to have an understanding of health education? Is the content described in the syllabi of the subjects available guided by a humanistic and interdisciplinary goal, as described by the SUS? Do the social subjects answer, in their syllabi, the necessities of learning for a future professional integrated into a health services network? Do the bibliographies selected for the theoretical support of the subjects link to the content described?

## AIMS

To analyze professional education in physiotherapy in a university located in the city of Niterói, Brazil, in the area of education in health towards the professional practice in basic care; to identify the professional profile of the course of physiotherapy of this same university, relating it to the representations drawn by professors and students; to recognize, in the undergraduate course of physiotherapy of this university, the information given about education in health and its application in basic care, by observing the syllabi and bibliographies.

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## METHOD

This is a case study, with a qualitative approach, which will follow descriptive steps, and will have, as a research scenario a university in the city of Niterói, Brazil. The participants of this study will be the course coordinator, five professors and fifteen students, who will be chosen according to the following criteria of inclusion: professors must be physiotherapists and students must be in their last two semesters of the course. There will be excluded from this study professors working for less than one year in the institution and students that have another undergraduate course in the area of health. The collection of data, which will start in November 2013, will be conducted through semi-structured interviews with the assistance of guidelines. The data collected will be organized in topic categories for analysis, through a process of data crossing based on the participants (interviews); in the documents available in databanks and websites (syllabi, institutional plan, laws, and others) and in the socioeconomic and cultural structure of the participants (the university). We aim to get as much amplitude as possible in the description, explanation and comprehension of the object of study. Furthermore, other studies performed and made available to the scientific community will be confronted with the context of this research.

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### Project Data

Dissertation Project of the Professional Master Program in Education in Health of UFF, which will be submitted for the appreciation of the Ethics in Research Committee of Medicine School / Antônio Pedro College Hospital.

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