

Graduate program in Collective Health in the context of developing science and technology in Brazil

Education, Science and Technology (S&T) are the true gold of a country in the XXI Century. Over 60% of all wealth generated in the world incorporates S & T and artifacts and innovations derived from the knowledge are the great contemporary productive force. Countries that do not invest in this valuable asset are doomed to consume at high cost, the production of others, increasing their economic and social dependence. According to scholars, a country must have at least 25% of its population in the “creative class” - term used to refer to the social group involved in scientific and technological development - to stand out in the repair of nations. This challenge underscores the urgent need to improve and enhance the quality of education at all levels.

In this scenario, Brazil is not bad in the picture: is among the 20 countries with more scientific production in the world, currently occupying the 13th place. This strength has been growing and can be exemplified by the number of journals indexed at ISI-Thomson Reuters database: from 26 in 2006 to 123 in 2009. This increase is due in part to the strategy of the company to increase the regional and thematic universe of journals it indexes. Brazil scored points in that direction correction: the number of national articles in ISI increased from 4,056 in 2007 to 12,502 in 2008, which is due to the greater number of journals indexed and increased number of texts by the journal. Indexing ISI exerts attraction on the authors, as noted in articles published in this thematic issue.

There are some important features of the generation of S & T in Brazil: the most relevant is that the Brazilian model has as privileged locus public universities and research institutes, and as a primary strategy, Post Graduation programs, so in most of the resources S & T is public, which is a different situation from several countries with strong private investment. Also, most of the scientific community is formed inside the country, and Brazil has a sophisticated level of basic research, strategic and applied, differing, for example, from the situation of Latin America. However - and also a feature - our technological development is incipient, and only in recent years, effective government policies began to focus on this challenge.

The weight of the health field in scientific publications is relevant: 40% of national production! Brazil is one of the 30 most productive countries that account for 95% of world production of medical and biomedical research (occupies the 23rd place in the ranking). From a quality standpoint - which considers the citations of articles - our performance is worse, because although we publish a lot, we are not very mentioned, and one of the reasons is the fact that the Portuguese is little known in the scientific universe.

According to updated statistics from CAPES, today there are 2,894 Post Graduation and 4,356 Academic and Professional Master and Doctoral programs. Of these, 473 programs and 760 courses are in the extensive area of Health. Today, the Collective Health has 54 programs and 75 courses, accounting for 11% of the total universe.

This thematic issue presents an evaluative panorama of the Post Graduation Program in Collective Health from the epistemological and curricular point of view and regarding training plans, to the demand of egress and scientific production. This area shows strong growth, contributing to national development, to the generation of wealth and to SUS. But as the reader will see, problems and challenges are also treated in the texts, among them the specification of the role of the area on the technological development, the internationalization of the scientific production and the unequal distribution of programs. The reader will find a heated debate about the issues and should consider the performance today as a point in the space of possible progress and challenges.

Maria Cecília de Souza Minayo

Scientific editor