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**EDITORIAL PRODUCTION**

Ricardo Borges Costa

**EDITORIAL**

## The evolution of dental research in Brazil

Life is a continuous struggle for ideals and there should be no distinction between professional and personal achievements. Goals to be reached should always exist to make us strive for success, both at the personal and institutional level.

Dentistry can no longer be considered a mere professionalizing area, but an area where scientific research is fundamental. It should therefore follow the principles of scientific methodology, which rule any area of knowledge.

Brazilian dentistry is, however, a very young area and could not follow the universal quality criteria until recently, as opposed to other areas of scientific knowledge. This process of pairing with other areas of knowledge should be a gradual goal established by policymakers. This would allow for the qualitative differentiation of researchers or graduation courses, and, especially, make our profession gain the respect of other areas.

Brazil is a country in continuous change, and any change must happen gradually not to be shocking. This analogy is valid for dentistry, because until recently there were no precise parameters to guide decisions regarding quality and merit. This lack of transparency restricted the development of researchers and of institutions, since there were no precise goals to be attained. Only the so-called idealists kept pursuing their goals, and discouragement reigned.

This situation began to change at the end of the last century, thanks to the action of our representatives at CNPq and CAPES. Criteria were established and information regarding quality in science is today made available on the internet to the scientific community.

However, it is clear that these criteria should be continually revised and perfected to meet the development in science. In my opinion, some of them are already out of date. There is great expectation as to how dentistry will react to these changes. The pessimism of some is overcome by the optimism of others, who not only believed in our potential but saw an opportunity for Brazilian dentistry to be respected as both a profession and a science.

While browsing the main databases universally accepted as quality indicators of scientific production published in journals, I found that:

- the number of Medline publications listing affiliation, dentistry, Brazil in 2001-2003 (n = 758) was larger than that of the past century (n = 423);
- in terms of ISI Web of Science, listing address, article, Dent\*, Brazil\*, the number of papers published in 2001-2003 (n = 898) was similar to that of the past century (n = 854).

In my opinion, these figures reflect the reaction of our professionals to the quality parameters established, since an effort was made to attain certain goals. I believe that nowadays there are criteria and transparency, urging us to plan our future and outline goals. Furthermore, the dream of justice encourages us to fight harder, to grow, and, above all, to fully live this life!

Jaime Cury

Member of the Editorial Board