

Representation of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy in CNPq

To be the first representatives in CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) elected by the scientific community within the fields of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy is a great honor and places on us the responsibility for carrying out the tasks of representation within this body. We believe that we can best demonstrate our gratitude for this support by making our actions transparent. Thus, we want to report some of our experiences over these first months of representation, with the aim of not only making some information accessible but also providing support for our community to be able to benefit as much as possible from the assistance offered by this funding agency.

The evolution of support for research within the fields of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy from CNPq has been very significant over the last ten years, with regard to funds for bursaries and research grants¹. Nonetheless, when we look at the growth in the community, in terms of physical therapy researchers with PhDs within the system, we can identify an increase of 700%, while among occupational therapists, the number with PhDs increased by 350% over the same period². In other words, this is equivalent to saying that we have achieved the support we received either through our work and organizational capacity, as exemplified by the increase in our qualified demand, *id est* through direct approaches to CNPq by members of the community to achieve larger amounts in funds and bursaries and through the representation itself, which had no formal existence four years ago. We have also observed that the number of opportunities offered by CNPq for obtaining funds, through greater numbers and more varied types of funding announcements, has increased over the last few years. The health sector has had particularly good fund allocations. Examples of this are the funding announcements for the fields of Basic Science, Public Health and Geriatrics and additional Universal Announcement of 2007, which, unusually, was open consecutively with the ones for the preceding year (2006) and for the current year (2008). In parallel with the increased opportunities, we have also undertaken systematic work towards obtaining a greater percentage of funds and bursaries through our committee. This committee started with the actions of Professor Dirceu Costa through his participation as a substitute representative at the time when we still did not have formal representation. The committee persevered under Professor Armêla D. Andrade during the period before ours, and it continues with us during the present administration. Over this period we have used several means to gain attention from CNPq in relation to our fields: visit to the president of CNPq (Ribeirão Preto, September 2007); letters to the president's office (December 20, 2007; January 11, 2008; February 22, 2008; February 25, 2008; and March 20, 2008); and detailing, using objective data on our growth and demand in reports made in relation to funding announcements assessed during 2007. These

¹CNPq/AET, Tables 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.4, 2008.

²Data from following up the personnel within the system over recent years.

actions at least partially explain the 50% growth in the number of productivity bursaries obtained at the last assessment (in November 2007). However, we believe that we still need to greatly strengthen this battle for support from this body that is more directed towards our fields. We in the committee, along with the community should engage in this especially by means of presentations of qualified proposals, correct completion of *curricula vitae* in the Lattes system and compilation of fair and coherent reports as contributions towards project evaluations.

With regard to evaluations on proposals presented to and considered by our committee (it should be borne in mind that not all of them are assessed here), it seems pertinent to describe how the overall score for classifying requests is calculated. Each proposal usually consists of a project and the Lattes *curriculum vitae* (among other documents that are not scored), and the information is “frozen” by CNPq before the assessment. The solicitants’ *curricula* are scored by the committee members, by rigorously using the criteria that are clearly displayed on the CNPq website. The project is also evaluated by the committee, which considers the reports issued by the *ad hoc* consultants in making its assessment. The final score is made up of the evaluations on the *curriculum vitae* and the project, and this will enable classification in decreasing order of final score, of all the participants in that funding announcement. The participants classified highest are awarded the funds and bursaries available. For some funding announcements, for example the Universal one, there is the requirement that a percentage of the total amount (last time it was 30%) should be destined for regions in which the research capacity is less consolidated (in this case, the regions were the North, Northeast and Center-West). For these regions, the proposals are also evaluated on merit, adopting the procedure described above.

With regard to evaluations of projects by *ad hoc* advisers, we would like to acknowledge all the work that the research productivity grant-holders perform in issuing reports. We recognize that this is an immense task, given that in the second half of 2007 alone, 161 proposals were assessed in relation to the Productivity and Universal Funding Announcements, of which 50 were for the Productivity and 111 for the Universal Announcement. Considering that only the productivity grant-holders could issue reports for these announcements, and that each case needed two reporters, 322 reports were issued by 29 grant-holders (11.1 cases each, or almost this much!). For this reason, it has not always been possible to respect each person’s field of expertise. Moreover, it has not been possible for grant-holders who were being assessed (in relation to the same funding announcement) to be dispensed from assessing their colleagues’ submissions. This overload was registered in our Final Report to CNPq, as a further justification for requesting an increase in the number of bursaries.

Although we know that performing this work is our obligation as grant-holders (those who fail to do so may have the payment for the month following the assessment withheld), we also know that this activity is much more than a simple obligation. Evaluation by peers gives legitimacy to the assessment process. Producing a good report (attentive, coherent, unbiased and constructive) is a task that is indispensable for providing precision and fairness in analyzing the requests. One positive aspect of this that should be emphasized is that, in most cases, the reports on the projects agree with each other. This suggests that the two reporters had similar readings of the case. This increases our assuredness in issuing the final report. Nonetheless, we still have just a few cases in which one reporter assesses the project as excellent and the other as moderate or weak. Likewise, there are others that consider all the items to be excellent or good but give a final assessment of moderate or weak. Thus, we are progressing slowly.

We would also like to inform you of some difficulties that we have had in analyzing Lattes *curricula vitae*, and to recommend that everyone should make a careful review of the information presented their *curriculum vitae*, so as to avoid being marked down in analyses on future requests. We believe that following the observations presented below will bring greater clarity to the process of analyzing *curricula vitae*. The principal problems found, *id est* the most frequent but not the only ones, have been in relation to:

- published papers:
 - duplication of an article: a single article must not appear more than once in the researcher’s Lattes *curriculum vitae*. Repetitions harm the analysis of the *curriculum vitae*;

- listing other studies that are not complete scientific articles: papers consisting of only one or two pages must not be listed as complete articles, and non-scientific articles such as letters, editorials, etc, should not be listed;
- listing of articles that have not actually been published yet: only list published articles that have first and last page numbers. Papers that have been submitted or are in press, etc, must not be listed. The only exception is articles that have been made available online, provided that there is a clear link (or DOI, etc), so that they can be accessed and checked easily. Like in other fields, a virtual search can be carried out for the complete articles that are listed, on a sampling basis, for checking at the time of each funding announcement;
- books and chapters: only books and chapters that have an ISBN description and number of pages are taken into account;
- student supervision: do not duplicate the list of students supervised (only list a single student per scientific startup, master's degree or doctoral degree supervision), even when the student has received a grant for more than one year; master's and doctoral degrees should only be listed as concluded if they have actually been concluded (with the conclusion date); only master's and doctoral degrees supervised within *sensu stricto* programs recommended by Capes should be listed; scientific startup supervisions are those in which the student has obtained a research grant; extension studies or course conclusion studies cannot be listed as scientific startups.

Finally, we want to give recognition to the response that we have had from the community, expressed through the submission of many qualified proposals, which is going to contribute towards boosting the production of knowledge within our field in the near future! Through concrete actions from the community and the committee, we believe that we will achieve greater attention and support from CNPq for the fields of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy, as a means for us to better consolidate our research and postgraduate programs, and for us to capacitate qualified individuals at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and consequently strengthen our professional activities.

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