

Implementation of the first master's course in Physical Therapy in the Northeastern Region

Dear colleagues,

The aim of this editorial is to let everyone practicing Physical Therapy in Brazil know about the implementation of the first master's course in Physical Therapy in the north and northeast of Brazil, which is starting this teaching semester. This information is a source of great pride among everyone representing the Department of Physical Therapy of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), among the other professionals at institutions representing Physical Therapy and also among the teachers of the undergraduate courses in the northeastern region. We also believe that the creation of the master's course in Physical Therapy at UFRN represents the pathway of struggles and victories by Physical Therapy at national level, particularly because of its significance for the academic world in relation to the Ministry of Education and important support agencies such as CAPES and CNPq. For physical therapists in the northeast and for students on the undergraduate course, the existence of a master's course in Physical Therapy in Rio Grande do Norte makes it possible to have a further great perspective for their professional future, through capacitation of new human resources.

Curiously, we are celebrating this victory at a moment when, exactly ten years ago, the first master's program in Physical Therapy in this country was put into operation at the Federal University of São Carlos. The transformations that Brazilian Physical Therapy have gone through since then are clear to see, especially with regard to the scientific nature of our interventions. This has made it possible for Brazilian Physical Therapy to take its place within the worldwide scientific scene, through its increasing volume of papers published in internationally indexed periodicals. In this way, we believe that the master's course at UFRN will, together with the other seven postgraduate programs now in operation, play an important role in consolidating Physical Therapy as a field of knowledge. Finally, within the social sphere, because the master's course in Physical Therapy at UFRN, is linked to a public teaching institution without course fees, the proposal for its creation presented the possibility of wide-ranging social inclusion, with positive repercussions for our profession and, above all, for society.

The team of full-time lecturers of the master's course in Physical Therapy at UFRN has some special characteristics, since these are young research teachers who recently completed their own

training. Nevertheless, their level of scientific production is already appropriate for the length of time that they have been professionally active, and they have a great potential for seeding teaching and research groups in our region. The course is beginning with ten full-time lecturers and one invited teacher, and fifteen places are available for the initial group. The program will have the use of five research laboratories: Neuromuscular Performance Evaluation Laboratory, Evaluation and Training Laboratory for Human Gait Dysfunctions, Motor Learning Laboratory, Cardiorespiratory Evaluation and Spirometry Laboratory and Geriatric Physical Therapy and Clinical Epidemiology Laboratory. The resources available for these laboratories have come from research projects approved by the national funding agencies, through partnerships with other postgraduate programs within Health Sciences at UFRN, with the postgraduate Physical Therapy program at the Federal University of São Carlos, and with other academic units within UFRN, such as with the Departments of Production Engineering, Architecture, Physiology and Morphology.

We cannot forget to thank the teaching institutions that have contributed greatly during the process of putting this program into operation, in the Federal Universities of São Carlos and Minas Gerais. The constant support for our proposals from the professors at these institutions has made it possible to bring this program into being. We also acknowledge the support from the central administration office and the postgraduate office of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our commitment towards Physical Therapy guided by the principles of science and ethics, so that it may contribute effectively towards the scientific and technological development of our country and so that it may be used as a tool for social transformation.

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