
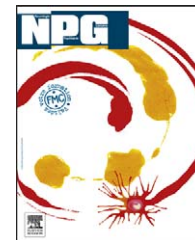




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THOUGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

An overview about geriatrics and aging in Brazil[☆]

Panorama sur la gériatrie et le vieillissement au Brésil

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Available online 24 April 2010

KEYWORDS

Geriatrics;
Aging;
Elderly;
Brazil;
Teaching;
Research

Summary The authors propose to present an overview about Geriatrics and aging in Brazil, as well as teaching, research and scientific production on aging. Since the beginning of the 1960s, the population aging has been rapidly increasing in Brazil, especially among people over 80 years old. Cardiovascular diseases and neoplasias are the morbidities most affecting the elderly. According to the Brazilian Geriatrics and Gerontology Society (SBGG), there are 829 geriatricians certified by this society, but recent researches pointed out that there is a need of 5000 geriatricians to handle the aging population in Brazil. When medical teaching is concerned, geriatrics or other related subjects were present in about 42% of the universities in Brazil in 2007. On a recent survey in 2009, there were 21 medical residency programs on geriatrics linked to the Culture and Education Ministry (MEC), most of them in the Southeast region.

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MOTS CLÉS

Gériatrie ;
Vieillesse ;
Brésil ;
Recherche ;
Enseignement

Résumé Les auteurs proposent un panorama sur la gériatrie et le vieillissement au Brésil, y compris l'enseignement, la recherche et la production scientifique. Le vieillissement démographique s'accélère dès les années 1960 au Brésil, surtout en ce qui concerne les plus de 80 ans. Les maladies cardiovasculaires et les néoplasies sont les pathologies les plus fréquentes. Selon la Société brésilienne de gériatrie et de gérontologie, il y a au Brésil 829 médecins spécialisés en gériatrie, mais des données indiquent qu'il faudrait 5000 spécialistes pour prendre en charge toute la population âgée brésilienne. Le thème de la gériatrie ou d'autres sujets en rapport a été abordé dans 42 % des facultés de médecine brésiliennes en 2007. Il y avait aussi 21 programmes de résidence en médecine reconnus par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Culture (MEC) en 2009, la majorité dans la région sud-est.

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Introduction

Brazil has been going through a clear population aging process. In 2025, it will be the sixth greatest aged population in absolute numbers (about 32 million older people) and 13.8% of its population will be old [1]. Of all the emerging countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), only South Africa does not belong to the group of 10 countries with the greatest population of older people [2].

Aging is such a major issue in the national scenario that, on October 19th 2006, the Health Ministry approved the National Health Policy for the Older Person (policy number 2.528) [3]. The guidelines of the National Health Policy for the Older Person are presented below:

- to promote healthy and active aging;
- overall attention, integrated to the health of the older person;
- to stimulate the intersectorial actions, aiming at the completeness of the attention;
- to provide adequate resources to ensure the quality of attention to the health of the older person;
- to stimulate the participation and strengthening of the social control;
- to form and continuously educate health care professionals of the Unified Health System (SUS) in the health care of the older person;
- to report and inform about the National Health Policy for the Older Person to health care professionals, managers and SUS users;
- to promote the national and international cooperation of experiences on the health of the older person;
- to sponsor the development of studies and research.

Within the context of population aging, the authors wish to address the state of the art of Geriatrics in Brazil, its learning process, the research, and the challenges brought by the demographic reality to the medical professionals development.

Aging of the Brazilian population

In Brazil, the process of population aging has been occurring rapidly since the beginning of the 1960s, when a drop on birth rates started to alter the age distribution pattern in Brazil [4].

Every year, 650 thousand new older people are incorporated to the Brazilian population, the vast majority presenting chronic diseases and some with functional handicap. In less than 40 years, we went from a mortality rate typical of a younger population to a scenario of costly diseases, typical of older people, characterized by chronic and multiple diseases demanding constant care, continuous medication and routine exams [5,6].

Recent estimates show that the older people already comprehend 11.1% of the total population of our country, with more than 21 million individuals [7]. Further estimates indicate that the older people population will increase continuously, approaching 20% of the total population of Brazil in 2050 [8].

The publication of *The Synthesis of social indicators: An analyses of life conditions of the Brazilian population – 2008* showed a significant increase in the older people in Brazil, specially among the 80 years old and plus (Fig. 1) [9].

Another indicator of the aging process of the population, the Aging Index, places Brazil, in the next decades, among the countries with the fastest growing rate of population aging. In 2025, it will have overlapped by five times the growth observed in 1975, and, for each group of 100 individuals under 15 years of age, there will be 46 older people (against 10 existing in 1975). Finally, in 2050, the

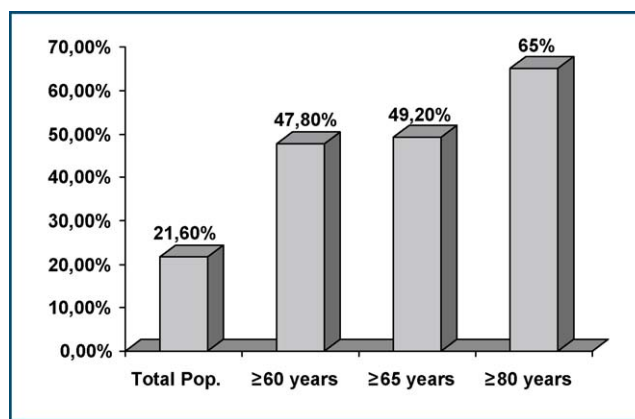


Figure 1. Relative growing of the total population and the elderly by age groups – Brasil – 1997/2007 period. IBGE, National Research by Housing Samples 1997/2007.

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