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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Brazilian pediatric research groups, lines of research, and main areas of activity*



Priscila H.A. Oliveira^{a,*}, Mariana G. Pinheiro^a, Larissa A. Isquierdo^a, Ricardo Sukiennik^a, Lucia C. Pellanda^{a,b}

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KEYWORDS

Pediatric; Research; Research groups; Research line

Abstract

Objectives: The Brazilian scientific production in the pediatrics field has been increasing significantly. It is important to identify the distribution and activity of these groups in the country and the main study areas, contributing with data for better resource allocation by institutions. *Methods*: An active research was conducted in the National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico [CNPq]) website, using as filters the macro area of the research group (Health Sciences), the area (Medicine), and descriptors related to pediatrics. Research lines and main area of pediatric research groups were classified according to the subject predominantly studied by each group. The scientific production of the leader of the pediatric research group between 2011 and 2014 was also analyzed.

Results: Most pediatric research groups in Brazil have more than five years of activity and are concentrated in the Southeast and South regions of the country; São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and Minas Gerais are the states with most groups. Of the 132 specific pediatric research groups analyzed, 14.4% have lines of research in multiple areas and 11.4% in child and adolescent health. Among the 585 lines of research of these groups, the most prevalent areas were: oncology, infectious diseases, epidemiology, and gastroenterology.

Conclusions: The pediatric research groups in Brazil have relevant scientific production, including works published in international publications, and are concentrated in regions with higher socioeconomic index. Most groups registered in CNPq started their activity in the last five years (46%), reflecting the recent growth of scientific production in this area.

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E-mails: priscilaraujo_@hotmail.com, priscilaraujoh@gmail.com (P.H.A. Oliveira).

^a Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre (UFCSPA), Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

b Instituto de Cardiologia, Fundação Universitária de Cardiologia, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

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^{*} Corresponding author.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Pediatria; Pesquisa; Grupos de pesquisa; Linha de pesquisa

Grupos e linhas de pesquisa pediátrica no Brasil e suas principais áreas de atuação

Resumo

Objetivos: A produção científica brasileira na área da pediatria vem aumentando significativamente. Diante deste quadro, é importante identificar a distribuição e atividade destes grupos no país e as principais áreas estudadas, contribuindo com dados para que as instituições possam alocar melhor seus recursos.

Métodos: Foi realizada pesquisa ativa no site do Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), utilizando como filtros a grande área do grupo - Ciências da Saúde, área-Medicina e descritores relacionados à pediatria. Posteriormente foram classificadas as linhas de pesquisa e área de atuação principal dos grupos de acordo com os temas prevalentemente estudados. Avaliou-se também a produção científica entre 2011 e 2014 dos coordenadores dos grupos de pesquisa pediátrica pelo currículo Lattes.

Resultados: A maioria dos grupos de pesquisa pediátrica do Brasil possui mais de cinco anos de atividade e estão concentrados nas regiões Sudeste e Sul do país, sendo São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul e Minas Gerais, os principais Estados. Dos 132 grupos específicos de pesquisa pediátrica cadastrados, 14,4% têm linhas de pesquisa em múltiplas áreas e 11,4% em saúde da criança e do adolescente. Entre as 585 linhas de pesquisa desses grupos, são predominantes as áreas: oncologia, infectologia, epidemiologia e gastroenterologia.

Conclusões: Os grupos de pesquisa pediátrica do Brasil têm produção relevante, inclusive internacional, e estão concentrados nas regiões de maior índice socioeconômico. Grande parte dos grupos cadastrados no CNPq entraram em atividade nos últimos cinco anos (46%), evidenciando crescimento recente da produção científica nesta área.

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Introduction

The evolution of the scientific production volume in Brazil in recent years can be easily verified based on indicators created to monitor this growth, which has attained international recognition. ^{1,2} This scenario is associated with the modernization of research institutions and national funding agencies such as the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico [CNPq]) and the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior [CAPES]), both responsible for investments in research and post-graduate programs in all 27 Brazilian states, in addition to state and institutional agencies.^{3,4}

Between 1990 and 2004, Brazilian indexed articles increased by 404%, whereas in the number of articles related to pediatrics increased by 61%, which constitutes encouragement for the continued growth in the area of pediatrics.^{5,6} Between 1984 and 2004, there was a 5.6-fold increase, i.e., more than three times the global increase (1.7-fold). In 2001, Brazil ranked 18th in the global ranking of Science and Technology.⁷ Particularly in the fields of child and adolescent health, there is a growing increase in publications and citations of articles from Brazil. However, there are still barriers to conducting studies in this age group, a matter that hinders the formation of new researchers and the area growth.

In this context, the systematic evaluation of groups and lines of research, researchers, universities, and regions, is an activity that has been relevant for scientists and administrators. Furthermore, funding agencies for scientific production need methods to improve the distribution of resources and strategies regarding different organs, allowing for the restructuring of research in specific areas and the increase in scientific production in Brazil.

This study aims to describe the demographic characteristics and the topics studied by medical research groups of Brazil registered in CNPq that have pediatrics as their area of activity. This knowledge is important to identify active areas with greater growth potential and those that need more incentive and funding.

Methods

This study was conducted through an active search in the Brazilian Research Group Directory on the CNPq website between the months of March and April of 2013, using as filters the macro area of the research group (Health Sciences), and the area (Medicine). The search was also guided by the following descriptors: pediatrics, child, infantile, childhood, neonate, adolescence, child's health, neonatology, newborn, juvenile, young, perinatal, perinatology, fetal, infant, growth, puberty, and pubertal.

Microsoft Excel 2010 (Microsoft®, NY, USA) was used to assemble a database with data collected from the research groups: group name; whether it was certified by the institution; year of creation; date of the last update; group leaders; main area; institution; city; state; home page; effects of the group researches; number of researchers, technicians and students; and research lines.

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