

The post-graduate situation in Argentina, South America

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The present article relates to the post-graduate situation in South America, especially in Argentina.

At present, there are 25 thousand certified physical therapists (PT) in Argentina. Every year around 840 PT graduate from the 12 public (4) and private (8) universities. Just three of them have post-graduate courses. They have as a requirement an entrance fee and a monthly payment and the courses focus on subjects like Sports Rehabilitation, Cardiovascular and Respiratory Diseases and Gerontology. Research and publication are not required; therefore these courses do not have international validity and importance.

The situation of physiotherapists and of most of the professions in Argentina and South America is related closely to the socio-economical situation that, in this case Argentina, is going through. Poverty and unemployment are factors that equally affect the condition of the professions and of the country. In May 2004, the poverty rate was 42.9% ¹⁾ while the unemployment rate was 15% ²⁾ at the same time. For PT the unemployment rate is up to 8%, the principal reason being the large number of non-certified persons working as physiotherapists.

In addition, Argentina has a government health insurance, which people pay for from their taxes (21% of everything that you buy), but due to corruption this budget is insufficient. As a consequence, this insurance does not cover all people's needs, and public hospitals do not have all the required equipment. As a result people try to join and pay into a private health insurance.

Thirty PT's were asked in a questionnaire about their specific fields and the places where they work, their knowledge about new physiotherapy devices and about

these post-graduate courses (Table 1). The highest percentage were those who worked in public hospitals and clinics. Most of the PT in these places are young and inexperienced, and receive a low salary. The second highest percentage worked in private hospitals and clinics. Here most of the PT's are recognized as professional and treat only people with private health insurance. The third and lowest percentage of PT's has their own private practice. On the other hand, there are Community PT's. These are the professionals who go to the patient's house. Most of their patients have neurological or respiratory pathologies. Table 2 shows the proportion of PT's in each specialized field. Trauma, usually related to sports injuries, and neurology are the most common specializations fields.

The technology, like ultrasound, short wave, tense, laser, etc, that is used in Argentina is imported from the United States. These devices can not be purchase so easily because of the currency rate change, so only private practices have the newest devices.

Despite the problems and difficult conditions that PT have to face, all try to study, looking for a scholarship, or to find work abroad, looking for a better and more secure life.

References

- 1 . http://www.indec.mecon.ar/nuevaweb/cuadros/74/pob_aglom_may04.pdf
- 2 . <http://www.trabajo.gov.ar/left/biblioteca/files/digitales/temas/temasdetrabajo99.pdf>

Table 2

Areas	
Trauma (外傷学)	60%
Neurology (神経学)	20%
Gerontology (老年医学)	5%
Esthetics (美容整形)	3%
Respiratory (呼吸)	2%
Others (その他)	5%

Table 1

Places where the PT works	
Hospital and Clinics	45%
Private Hosp or Clinics	35%
Private Practice	20%