

0211

Training and job market for occupational therapy: crisis announcements. Formación y mercado de trabajo para la terapia ocupacional: anuncios de una crisis

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INTRODUCTION: In the last ten years, the objective of the Brazilian Educational Politics has been to increase the number of students enrolled in college courses. To achieve this goal, many private colleges and universities have opened up, and created negative impacts on emerging professions such as occupational therapy. **OBJECTIVES:** A study has been made of the indicators of occupational therapy in the job market and an analysis made of the perspectives of the evolution of the profession in Brazil. **METHODS:** This documented study was supported by the annual census done between 1997 and 2007 of university level education which is done by the Government, specifically on occupational therapy. **RESULTS:** Within the period studied, the numbers of schools, places offered, enrolled students and graduates had increased. In the last three years, it was observed that although the numbers of schools and places was the same, the number of students enrolled and graduates had decreased. The highest number of candidates was in 2001, of beginners was in 2002, when these began to decrease. The number of graduates began to decrease in 2007. Studies of the job market indicate that there are 40.000 posts for occupational therapists and that only in the public health system. **CONCLUSION:** The previous analyses of occupational therapy in the country were optimistic. The present panorama, with fewer candidates, beginners and graduates in occupational therapy, signals an involution tendency. The creation of public schools to solve the problem has not been sufficient. By training a more general approach has not benefitted the production of more specific knowledge needed for the teaching occupational therapy. This situation has compromised the identity and the defense of the profession in the job market. The training, scientific production and level of organization of profession must be revised so that it can face the challenges of this future crisis.