

## OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF WORKERS AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION IN PRE-RETIREMENT<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to characterize the occupational profile of workers at a public university institution in pre-retirement. This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study, carried out in a public university institution located in the state of Paraná, Brazil. The study had the participation of all officials who were in pre-retirement due to age or length of professional practice and also those who could already be retired. Workers were identified by means of a list made available by the human resources sector of the institution where the study was conducted. We observed that a significant portion (19.9%) of the population of officials is in pre-retirement, with 20.3% of professors and 19.8% of technicians at the institution being among this population; 65% of pre-retirees are women; the predominant age group was from 56 to 60 years (37.1%). We emphasize that the results of this study will provide means for implementing a retirement preparation program at the institution, in order to help workers to prepare themselves for a healthy aging, thus enabling better coping with this life phase, as there are no programs like this at the institution.

**Keywords:** Retirement. Workforce. Aging. Work. Nursing.

### INTRODUCTION

The increased life expectancy, deriving from the progressive advancement of science, has resulted in a shift in the age pyramid, represented by the significant growth of the elderly population. Thus, longevity constitutes one of the greatest challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially concerning the quality of life of people who get older<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) published in 2010 information on the extended top of the Brazilian population pyramid, showing the growth of the population aged  $\geq 65$  years, which was 4.8% in 1991, rising to 5.9% in 2000, and reaching 7.4% in 2010. Thus, the absolute growth of the population in the last ten years has been mainly due to the increased adult and elderly population<sup>(2)</sup>.

Such aging has already some effects on implications with a demographic, economic, and

social nature, either on the change in individuals' life and family structures or on the changes in workforce composition<sup>(3)</sup>. With this background, most individuals are at a productive age, having labor as the focus of their life, stimulated by the overvaluation of productivity and capital<sup>(4)</sup>.

It is emphasized that this progressive aging process at work brings a new reality to organizations, where managers' awareness regarding the need to generate strategic and creative solutions to keep the working capacity of their staff is essential, respecting limitations related to age and appreciating the knowledge and wisdom of older people<sup>(5)</sup>.

Thus, all organizations, including the public ones, must be attentive to the performance of their workers, their aging process, their satisfaction and motivation at work. Otherwise, they will be doomed to a significant drop in overall performance, since workers are those actually in charge of the institutions' success<sup>(6)</sup>.

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Considering that in the institution under study there were not projects that aided to prepare officials to cope with retirement, and that this subject was included as a goal of dean's administration within the period 2010-2014, the study provides means for implementing a retirement preparation program.

This article aims to characterize the occupational profile of workers at a public university institution who are in the pre-retirement phase<sup>(7)</sup>.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted in a public university institution located in the state of Paraná, Brazil. The academic/administrative structure of this institution has seven executive agencies of the Rectorship, 6 pro-rectorships, 9 study centers (with 57 departments), 2 coordinations, and the supporting and supplementary agencies.

The study population consists of all workers holding an employment relation to the university institution who are in the pre-retirement phase due to age or length of professional practice and, also, those who could already be retired, making up a total of 1,048 officials.

As selection criteria for the study, we adopted the Brazilian social security legislation, Law 8,213/1991<sup>(8)</sup>, article 48, that is, for full retirement due to age we included male workers aged  $\geq 65$  years and female workers  $\geq 60$  years. Still concerning full retirement, the Brazilian Constitutional Amendment 41<sup>(9)</sup> states that men aged 60 years combined to 35 years of registered labor and women aged 55 years combined to 30 years of labor are also included into this category.

We also included into the research officials with the possibility of requesting voluntary retirement, that is, proportional retirement benefit, which adopts proportional income discounts related to the years remaining to achieve full retirement. We included into this category men aged  $> 53$  years combined to 35 years of labor and women aged  $> 48$  years combined to 30 years of labor<sup>(9)</sup>.

Workers were identified by means of a list made available in April 2011 by the human resources sector of the institution where the

study was conducted, consisting of the following variables: birth date, age, hiring date, sex, workplace, length of professional practice at the institution, and profession practiced.

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the institution where the study was conducted, under the CAAE 0149.0.268.000-10.

Data were tabulated in the software *Microsoft Excel 2010* and analyzed in terms of simple percentage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the institution's 5,264 officials, 1,048 (19.9%) were in the pre-retirement phase. This information reflects the slow and difficult replacement of this workforce, considering this is a public university institution. The literature claims this is one of the major internal problems of such institutions, due to the fact that the public sector has undergone significant changes in its organizations, with downsizing of staff, significant increase in retirements, and limited staff replacement<sup>(5)</sup>.

Thus, institutions have adopted procedures to predict human resource needs and create new ways to operate, allowing to anticipate the future and act in a proactive way, being cautious to react and face the challenges that emerge<sup>(10)</sup>.

The officials at the institution under study are classified into two categories by human resources sector: technicians and professors. The list made available by this sector indicates that 20.3% of professors and 19.8% of technicians were in the pre-retirement phase. These findings allow a reflection regarding the difficulties to replace the intellectual workforce, since many professors have obtained an accumulation of knowledge during their professional life at the institution and this attribute is not easily replaced by younger workers.

Concerning the above considerations, a study conducted in a Brazilian electric power company identified that the employment termination programs implemented did not provide for actions to transfer knowledge from the employee who is leaving the company to those who will replace her/him, and the company loses the labor qualified and trained over an entire working life by suddenly losing its employees with valuable skills and experiences<sup>(11)</sup>.

Just as professors are getting older, a significant portion of technicians are in pre-retirement, something which emphasizes a literature finding describing the importance of adopting a human resources policy that keeps the work capability of workforce, adjusted to the new age profile of staff, as well as a training program for replacement/restoration of competences<sup>(5)</sup>.

Another aspect raised by this study is the higher percentage of female workers (65.0%), confirming the information provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which highlights the existence of a phenomenon named “feminization of the workforce”, observed by the growing female presence within the labor market, including political, economic, and social activities<sup>(12)</sup>.

According to data from the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the contribution of women in the Brazilian household income increased from 30.1% in 1992 to 40.9% in 2009. More significant was the increased proportion of married who contribute to the income of their families, which increased from 39.1% to 65.8% within this period. This demonstrates that women has taken new social roles, such as that of provider, given their participation in the labor market<sup>(13)</sup>.

Among the workers with possibility of acquiring full retirement, the predominant age group was from 56 to 60 years (37.1%), followed by 61 to 65 years (26.2%) and 66 to 70 years (10.6%). The workers who did not have these requirements fit the possibility of voluntary retirement, representing 24.0% of the population in the age group from 51 to 55 years and 2.1% from 48 to 50 years.

The average length of professional practice at the institution was 25 years, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 42 years. The highest concentration was in the range from 31 to 40 years of work at this institution (35.6%), followed by 30.2% from 21 to 30 years. The fact of having 0 year means that the official has fit the research due to the criterion retirement age, with the possibility of having been hired less than a year before.

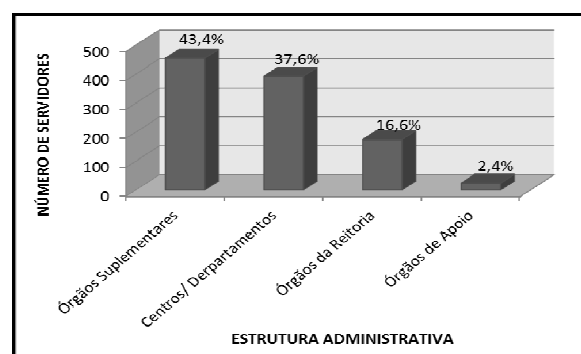
Data presented above show that many workers, even after reaching retirement age, remain in the labor market. A study justifies this

finding by claiming that labor is determinant for social organization and integration, it is interconnected to human relationships and intrinsic to the constitution of the human identity itself<sup>(14)</sup>.

In addition, labor is an important matrix of personal identity and self-image construction, as well as a source of self-esteem and self-appreciation, being also a way of being integrated to the environment, representing a belonging feeling<sup>(15)</sup>.

Still regarding this subject, a research conducted with retired people from a town in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, investigated how this population contributed to the dynamics of informal work and revealed that out of the 5 respondents, 4 reported that working after retirement is positive both due to the feeling of being useful and to the maintenance of body and mind health<sup>(16)</sup>. Another study, conducted with 17 nursing professionals, revealed that the economic issue is the main influencer for keeping these professionals in the labor world, followed by the fact of appreciating the labor environment and the activities they performed in this environment<sup>(17)</sup>.

The distribution of officials participating in the study into the administrative structure of the institution is displayed in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of officials in the pre-retirement phase according to the administrative structure of the institution under study. Londrina (PR), 2011.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In this distribution, a higher concentration of pre-retirees stands out in some sectors, such as: City Hall of the campus, belonging to the Rectorship agencies, demanding from workers activities that require physical strength; the University Hospital, which is included into the

supplementary agencies, by providing health care; and teaching centers, with an emphasis on the Center for Health Sciences, with teaching activities and pedagogical competences of professors.

Given these results, the need for adjustments in the workplace draws attention, in order to prevent the risks of early retirement and inability to work, since long-term health problems and chronic diseases increase with old age. The decreased physical ability to work as someone gets older is clear. Cardiorespiratory ability and muscle strength decrease around 2% per year from 30 years of age. Reduced physical ability constitutes a problem, above all in professions with a high physical load<sup>(18)</sup>.

It becomes evident, then, that worker's age brings to light the need of employing institutions to ensure actions to promote occupational health, prevent structural changes and disorders/disabilities, with or without an underlying disease and effective recovery of dysfunctions to overcome the limitations and/or restrictions posed by this kind of disorder that affects occupational health<sup>(19)</sup>.

For this, the need to implement retirement preparation programs at companies stands out, which constitute important management tools. These programs aim to ensure an adequate preparation of these officials to better cope with the aging phase at work and provide quality of life, there is a need for the worker to be prepared since her/his first day of activity<sup>(20)</sup>.

In this process, we must understand the time to prepare for retirement as a continued education trickery, related to life planning and, therefore, it must be of interest to people at all ages<sup>(21)</sup>.

## FINAL REMARKS

The results showed that a significant portion of the population of officials (19.9%) is in the pre-retirement phase, and 20.3% represent the teaching category and 19.8% represent the category of technicians.

It is worth highlighting that until 2011, the time of data collection for this study, the institution did not have a policy to prepare its workers for retirement, weakening this process, since after long years of hard work, the official was faced with many doubts, wishes, and expectations before this striking life phase.

Retirement preparation programs allows providing the preparation of this population to a healthy aging and a better cope with this moment, especially in their work process.

After the results obtained by this study, the authors enabled the implementation of an institutional program to prepare for retirement, in order to provide officials with moments of reflection, so that they could face this phase with more resources.

We emphasize, with this, the relevant role that the nurse can play in programs with this purpose, to facilitate the search of pre-retirees for a better quality of personal and professional life.

It is worth mentioning the difficulty faced by researchers to obtain the authorization to enable the study, even involving a goal of the rectorship administration. The pertinence of the research was analyzed by many instances, resulting in the delay to provide the list by the human resources sector with the listing of workers in pre-retirement, something which procrastinated for 12 months the diagnosis presented in the study.

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## PERFIL OCUPACIONAL DE TRABALHADORES DE INSTITUIÇÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA PÚBLICA EM PRÉ-APOSENTADORIA

### RESUMO

Este estudo objetivou caracterizar o perfil ocupacional dos trabalhadores de uma instituição universitária pública em pré-aposentadoria. Trata-se de um estudo quantitativo, descritivo, transversal, desenvolvido em uma instituição universitária pública localizada no estado do Paraná. Participaram do estudo todos os servidores que se encontravam em pré-aposentadoria por idade ou tempo de serviço e, também, aqueles que já poderiam estar aposentados. Os trabalhadores foram identificados por meio de lista disponibilizada pelo setor de recursos humanos da instituição onde o estudo foi realizado. Observou-se que uma parcela significativa (19,9%) da população de servidores está em pré-aposentadoria, sendo que 20,3% dos docentes e 19,8% dos técnicos da instituição fazem parte dessa população; 65% dos pré-aposentados são do sexo feminino; a faixa etária predominante foi dos 56 aos 60 anos (37,1%). Ressalta-se que os resultados deste estudo servirão de subsídio para a implantação de um programa de preparação para aposentadoria na instituição, para auxiliar os

trabalhadores no preparo para um envelhecimento saudável, proporcionando, assim, melhor enfrentamento dessa fase da vida, visto que na instituição inexistem programas desse tipo.

**Palavras-chave:** Aposentadoria. Força de Trabalho. Envelhecimento. Trabalho. Enfermagem.

## PERFIL OCUPACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES DE UNA INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITÁRIA PÚBLICA EN PRE-JUBILACIÓN

### RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo caracterizar el perfil ocupacional de los trabajadores de una institución universitaria pública en pre-jubilación. Se trata de un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo, transversal, desarrollado en una institución universitaria pública ubicada en el estado de Paraná, Brasil. El estudio incluyó a todos los servidores que estaban en pre-jubilación por edad o tiempo de servicio y, también, aquellos que ya podrían estar jubilados. Los trabajadores fueron identificados por medio de una lista ofrecida por el sector de recursos humanos de la institución donde se realizó el estudio. Se observó que una parte significativa (19,9%) de la población de servidores está en pre-jubilación, siendo que 20,3% de los docentes y 19,8% de los técnicos de la institución se incluyen en esa población; 65% de los pre-jubilados son del sexo femenino; la franja de edad predominante fue de 56 a 60 años (37,1%). Se resalta que los resultados de este estudio proporcionarán contribuciones para la implementación de un programa de preparación para la jubilación en la institución, a fin de ayudar a los trabajadores a prepararse para un envejecimiento saludable, proporcionando, así, un mejor enfrentamiento de esta fase de la vida, ya que en la institución no hay programas de este tipo.

**Palabras clave:** Jubilación. Fuerza de Trabajo. Envejecimiento. Trabajo. Enfermería.

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