



QUALITY OF LIFE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE OF BRAZILIAN STUDIES

¹Camila Zanesco, ¹Jessica Galvan, ^{1,2,4}Fabiana Bucholdz Teixeira Alves, ^{1,2,4}Cristina Berger Fadel, ^{2,3}Danielle Bordin, ^{1,6}Bruno Pedroso, and ^{1,5}Ana Cláudia Garabeli Cavalli Kluthcovsky

¹Postgraduate Program in Health Sciences, State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

²Regional University Hospital of Campos Gerais, Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

³Nursing and Public Health Department, State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

⁴Dentistry Department, State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

⁵Medicine Department, State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

⁶Physical Education Department, State University of Ponta Grossa (UEPG), Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

The construction of quality of life (QoL) is a goal in all spheres of health. It is important to research the factors they influence, and specifically in the university field this analysis there special role, since the student's admission in this environment can significantly influence their quality of life. To outline a profile of QOL studies conducted at the last ten years with university students in Brazil. The databases utilized were Scopus, Scielo, PubMed and Lilacs, through the descriptors: Quality of life AND Brazil AND University students OR Students OR Graduandos OR Academics. The initial search found 370 articles, and in the final, a total of 23 articles were included. The analysis showed a prioritization in the evaluation of the quality of life of students in the health area in relation to higher education in other areas. There is carency for studies comparing the quality of life of newly enrolled students in courses with those allocated in subsequent periods. There is great need for a broader discussion of the theme, so that more studies are directed to assess the quality of life of university students from different higher education levels, as well as in different periods during graduation.

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INTRODUCTION

The term quality of life (QOL) has been widely discussed in the field of collective health, and recently it has been a worrying scenario in Higher Education Institutions (IES). In view of its epistemological relevance, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined QOL as 'the individual's perception of his / her position in life, in the context of the culture and value systems in which he lives, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns' (The WHOQoL Group, 1996). Thus, the quality of life has a broad approach, and can be simply understood as the individual's perception of themselves and the issues that are consistent, such as social, emotional, beliefs, values, perceptions, goals, among others (Bampi et al., 2013).

In fact, the term exposes many meanings as it is a social construction, and reflects knowledge, experience and values of individuals living in the community, at times, cultures and different spaces. Since QOL is a subjective and multidimensional object, it is necessary to investigate multiple factors related to living conditions and human behavior, and there is no consensus of the evaluative method in the literature. Many instruments have been developed for this purpose, with few fully considered the broad aspects, mentioned above, which can compromise your information apprehension capacity (Minayo et al., 2000 apud Gordia et al., 2011). Among the measures most used are generic instruments such as Medical Outcomes Studies 36-item Short-Form (MOS SF-36), Medical Out comes Studies 12-item Short-Form (MOSSF-12), Euro Qol 5D, the WHOQOL-100 and the WHOQOL-Bref. For

Almeida-Brasile *et al.* (2017) these instruments are responsible for evaluating many aspects of the impact of a health condition, such as functional capacity, pain and general health, and considered effective for planning actions in the context of health promotion (Almeida-Brasil, *et al.*, 2017), (Costa *et al.*, 2014). University students are commonly included in QOL assessment surveys, due to their exposure to various tasks associated with busy periods for participation in classes, in addition to extra-time required to study required by the demands of the university, and often associate such activities the working day (Calais *et al.*, 2007), (Lanzotti *et al.*, 2015). In the specific case of students in the health field, the situation is aggravated by the psychological point of view, since they are exposed to several critical situations to relate with patients needing support necessary adversity coping (Paro and Bittencourt, 2013). Still, with the knowledge that the student access to higher education is a framework that promotes changes associated with new experiences and perceptions which ultimately influence their well-being and quality of life (Silva and Heleno, 2012), it is necessary the search for strategies that enable the maintenance of QoL in the academic context, such that there is a disclosure and coping with situations that can cause imbalances in this regard. Considering the importance that the issue of evaluation of the quality of life of college students presents to healthcare aimed to outline a profile of studies on QoL conducted among university students in Brazil, considering the time frame of the last ten years.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a systematic review of the literature, considering the studies published in the last ten years (2006 - 2016) on the subject quality of life of university students in Brazil, when directed to students of health courses. The listed databases were *Scopus*, *Scielo*, *PubMed* e *Lilacs*, since they deal with national and international bases prominent in health, free access to obtain scientific articles through primary sources and availability of original works (Bernardo *et al.*, 2004). According to the peculiarities of each base, the search was carried out by combining the following key words: Quality of life AND Brazil AND College Students OR Graduates Students OR Academic. In the case of the international bases, the following terms were used: Quality of life AND Brazil AND University students OR Students OR Undergraduates OR Academics (Fig. 1).

RESULTS

A total of 370 items was found in the initial search, being evaluated by the title and abstract, so that these were excluded 331 references for not strictly correlate with the review of the proposal. The 39 selected references the summary were then interpreted in its entirety, so that 16 were excluded; one because it is systematic review 4 since they are literature review and 11 are employed in duplicate databases. Thus, finally, a total of 23 references were included in the survey. Of each item included and aimed at deepening the discussion on QOL studies with university students in the health field in Brazil were extracted the following characteristics: year of publication, title in the language it was written publication, authorship, subject analysis or target audience, instrument, category IES second financing: public, private or mixed, and geographical location of the IES that the authors were linked

(Table 1- attachment). Considering the findings in the Scopus database, they are distributed between 2008 and 2016, in a total of five articles (Moritz *et al.*, 2016), (Chazan and Campos, 2015), (Bampi *et al.*, 2013), (Arronqui *et al.*, 2011), (Eurich and Kluthcovsky, 2008). All of these studies used the WHOQoL-Bref instrument to collect data on QOL; the unanimity approached students of the health area of public universities, being four studies with approach of students of graduation in nursing and one of undergraduate students in medicine; and in relation to territorial coverage, two studies were carried out in the South Region, two in the Southeast Region and one in the Federal District.

With regard to the Scielo database, 11 articles were published between 2006 and 2016. Of these, six used the WHOQoL-bref instrument to collect QOL data (Baraldi *et al.*, 2015), (Moura *et al.*, 2016), (Chazan and Campos, 2013), (Ramos Dias *et al.*, 2010), (Alves *et al.*, 2010); two used the SF-36 (Bacchi *et al.*, 2013), (Paro and Bittencourt, 2013), two used a qualitative technique of information collection, using focal group interview (Figueiredo *et al.*, 2014), (Oliveira and Ciampone, 2008), one was used as a self-administered questionnaire (Meyer *et al.*, 2012), and one used only part of the WHOQoL-Bref instrument, which refers to the psychological evaluation of subjects (Gonçalves and SilvanyNeto, 2013). Of the studies, eight worked on the evaluation of QoL in public universities, one addressed students from public and private institutions, and two were conducted in private institutions, all of which addressed health students. Regarding the subjects studied, six studies included undergraduate students in medicine, one included undergraduate pharmacy students, one included undergraduate nursing students, two included nursing undergraduate students, and one comprised students from various courses in the area of health. Considering the region of the study, two were carried out in the South Region, one in the Center-West Region, five in the Southeast region and three in the Northeast region.

In the *Lilacs* database a study was found (Sousa Leão *et al.*, 2011), and the instrument used was the WHOQoL-Bref. The study addressed medical students at a public university; and was carried out in the Southeast region. In the PubMed database were six studies between the years 2014 and 2016; four used the WHOQoL-Bref instrument (Enns, 2016), (Pagnin and Queiroz, 2015), (Tempiski, 2015), (Paro, 2014), three of which used an association with the DREEM instrument and two applied the SF-36 (Lins, 2015), (Lins, 2016;). All studies found on this basis evaluated medical students; one was held at one public university, two at private HEI, and three were multicenter. Regarding location, two studies involved the Northeast Region and one the Southeast Region. In general, the most used instruments were WHOQoL, WHOQoL-Bref and SF-36, which together totaled 20 of the 23 studies included in the methodological process of choice. The WHOQoL-Bref was used in 17 studies, of which four used an additional instrument to collect QOL information. Considering the division of studies according to the form of HEI funding, only one study came from mixed HEI, 15 were conducted in public universities and two in private universities. As to the geographic distribution in which the surveys were carried out, three were considered at a national level, with the involvement of more than one region of the national territory; four were developed in the South, nine in the Southeast, five in the Northeast and two in the Midwest.

Table 1. Articles included in the study

Year of publication	Title	Author	State	Students	University	Instrument
2016	Quality of life of undergraduate nursing students at a Brazilian public university	Moritz AR;Pereira EM; KP Borba; MJ Clapis; VG Gevert; MF Mantovani	Paraná	Nursing students	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2016	Medical Students' Perception of Their Educational Environment and Quality of Life: Is There a Positive Association?	Enns SC; Perotta B; Paro HB; Gannam S; Peleias M; Mayer FB; Santos IS; Menezes M; Senger MH; Barelli C; Silveira OS; Martins MA; Zen Tempiski P.	Broad	Medical students	Uninformed	DREEM WHOQoL-Bref
2016	Quality of life of undergraduate students in nursing.	Moura IH; Nobre RS, Cortez RMA, Campelo V, Macêdo SF, SilvaARV.	Piauí	Nursingstudents	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2016	Health-related quality of life of medical students in a Brazilian student loan programme	Lins L, Carvalho FM, Menezes MS, Porto-Silva L, Damasceno H	Bahia	Scholarship students	Private	SF-36
2015	Relationship among Medical Student Resilience, Educational Environment and Quality of Life.	Tempiski P, Santos IS, Mayer FB,Enns SC, Perotta B, Paro HBMS , Peleias SGM, Garcia VL, Baldassin S, Guimaraes KB, Silva NR, Cruz EMTN , Tofoli LF, Silveira PSP, Martins MA.	Broad	Medical students	13 publicHEIs/ 9privateHEIs	DREEM WHOQoL-Bref
2015	Quality of life assessment of nutrition students	Baraldi S, Bampi LNS, Pereira MF, Guilhem DB, Mariath AB, Campos ACO.	Distrito Federal	NutritionStudents	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2015	Quality of life of medical students at the state university of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), measured using Whoqol-bref: A multivariate analysis	Chazan; Campos.	Rio de Janeiro	Medical students	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2015	Health-related quality of life of students from a private medical school in Brazil.	Lins L, Carvalho FM, Menezes MS, Porto-Silva L, Damasceno H	Bahia	Medical students	Private	SF-36
2015	Comparison of quality of life between medical students and young general populations.	Pagnin; Queiroz.	Rio de Janeiro	Medical students	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2014	Empathy among medical students: is there a relation with quality of life and burnout?	Paro HB, Silveira PS, Perotta B, Gannam S, Enns SC, Giaxa RR, Bonito RF, Martins MA, Tempiski PZ.	Broad	Medical students	13 HEIspublic/ 9HEIsprivate	DREEM WHOQoL-Bref
2014	Perceptions of UFOP medical students about their quality of life	Figueiredo AM; Ribeiro GM; Reggiani ALM; Pinheiro BA; Leopoldo GO; Duarte JAH; Oliveira LB; Avelar LM.	Minas Gerais	Medical students	Public	Focus Group
2013	Nurse undergraduate students' perception of quality of life	Bampi LN, Baraldi S, Guilhem D, Pompeu RB, Campos AC.	Distrito Federal	Nursingstudents	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2013	Assessment of quality of life, back pain, functionality and changes in the spine of physiotherapy students	Bacchi CA; Candotti CT; Noll M; Minossi CES.	Rio Grande do Sul	Physiotherapiststudents	Public	SF-36
2013	Psychological dimension of the quality of life of medical students.	Gonçalves; SilvanyNeto	Bahia	Medical students	Public	Avaliação psicológica do WHOQoL-Bref
2013	Quality of Life of Medical Students by WHOQOL-bref scoring — UERJ, 2010	Chazan; Campos	Rio de Janeiro	Medical students	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2013	Quality of life of health graduates	Paro, Bittencourt	São Paulo	Students ofhealthcourses	Public	SF-36
2012	Quality of life and occupational stress in medical students.	Meyer C; Guimarães ACG; Machado Z; ParciasSR.	Santa Catarina	Medical students	1HEIspublic/ 11 HEIsprivate	Self-administer edquestionnaire
2011	Perceptions of nursing students on their quality of life	Arronqui GV, Lacava RMVB; Magalhães SMF; Goldman RE.	São Paulo	Nursingstudents	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2011	Well-being and help-seeking: an exploratory study among final-year medical students	Sousa Leão PBO, Martins LAN; Menezes PR; Bellodi PL.	São Paulo	Medical studentsfrom FMUSP	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2010	Quality of life in one hundred students of Sorocaba Medicine course - PUC / SP.	Ramos-Dias JC; Libardi MC; Zillo CM; Igarashi MH; Senger MH.	São Paulo	Medical students	Private	WHOQoL-Bref
2010	Quality of life in medical students at the beginning and end of the course: evaluation by the Whoqol-bref.	Alves JGB; Tenório M; Anjos AG; Figueroa JN.	Pernambuco	Medical students	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2008	Evaluation of quality of life of undergraduate nursing students from first and fourth years: The influence of sociodemographic variables	Eurich; Kluthcovsky	Paraná	Nursingstudents	Public	WHOQoL-Bref
2008	Quality of life of nursing students: the construction of a process and interventions	Oliveira; Ciampone	São Paulo	Nursingstudents	Private	Focus Group

DISCUSSION

Studies on quality of life (QOL) had their origin in movements in areas such as the human and biological sciences, aiming at valuing broader parameters than controlling symptoms, reducing mortality or increasing life expectancy (Talhaferro *et al.*, 2006). First employed around 1964, the term QOL gained more emphasis in recent years with the publication of the first study using the WHOQOL-bref instrument in 1998 (Kluthcovsky and Kluthcovsky, 2006). Although their use is being gradually inserted in the agendas of researchers, few studies are involving university students as subjects of interest (Langame *et al.*, 2016). At the same time, as evidenced in this literature review and through database searches, there has been a monopoly of studies aimed at assessing the quality of life among university students in the health area (Paro and Bittencourt, 2013). They address QOL in general terms, through the single application of tools or the holding of focus groups. Little is published considering studies comparing the quality of life of newly enrolled students in undergraduate courses such as those allocated in subsequent periods, and no studies were found that frequently follow these students. Regarding the typology of the instruments, the use of generics was predominant for the evaluation of QoL. For Kluthcovsky and Kluthcovsky (2010), these assess various aspects of quality of life and health status, and can be used for individuals regardless of illness or health condition and also for healthy people. In the present study, among the most used instruments, are the studies that use the different versions of the WHOQOL, which also belongs to the generic instrument class. The use of the abbreviated versions of the instrument such as the WHOQOL-100 and the WHOQOL-bref nowadays is facilitated by the existence of free tools to analyze them, easy to handle, deconstructing the barrier imposed by the use of proprietary software, such as the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), with high attributed costs, besides requiring specific knowledge for its use (Pedroso *et al.*, 2009), (Pedroso *et al.*, 2010).

The vast use of instruments with a generic character, and in the abbreviated version, is linked to the high comprehensiveness, easy and quick resolution of these, as in the case of WHOQOL, since it has a cross-cultural character, showing individual perception of the person, considering QOL in several groups with different influences (Kluthcovsky and Kluthcovsky, 2010). In view of the need to approach the student in a comprehensive way, due to the demand for the expansion of higher education, the evaluation of well-being and QoL is fundamental to outline the profile of this specific group and to outline strategies to promote the respective areas (Silva and Heleno, 2012). Considering the finding related to the period of publications, which have been more prominent since the beginning of the twenty-first century, and have intensified in the last ten years, this issue can be related to the increased concern about the QoL of individuals, with the academic and professional performance (Paro and Bittencourt, 2013). The largest concentration of studies occurred in the Southeast region, and may be associated with a larger population and the concentration of public and private universities established in the respective states (Sidone *et al.*, 2016). The studies developed were concentrated in universities with a public teaching character, an aspect connected to the greater incentive of these higher education institutions to the development of university research and extension activities, as well as the concern to keep the student in higher education and

quality in relation to their formation, added to a larger investment or available financial resources related to development agencies and government entities (Chiarini and Vieira, 2012). It is pointed out, as a current difficulty in surveying literature reviews, that there is no requirement for a high number of journals to use the DiHS database (Descriptors in Health Sciences), exposing too many descriptor possibilities and making it difficult to fully analyze the studies already published (Diniz and Martins, 2015). Finally, it is pointed out that globalization has been spreading the use of foreign languages by national journals to clarify that the studies found in the search in question, often presented in English or Spanish language, are not necessarily published in international journals (Machado *et al.*, 2016).

Conclusions

It is concluded that the studies that evaluate the QOL of university students prioritize the subjects of the health area, which are mainly conducted in the Southeast region, and who use more frequently generic instruments of the WHOQOL group. It is important to carry out future studies related to the evaluation of the quality of life that includes the largest possible number of students, regardless of the area in which they are allocated, focusing on their follow-up during the changes undergone during the academic life. As well as the accomplishment of actions against the obtained results, aiming at the improvement or constant rescue of aspects related to the QOL of the university students.

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