

Insertion of people in maturity in college education

Inserção de pessoas na maturidade na educação superior

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RESUMO

Objetivo: comparar a inserção das pessoas maduras (≥ 40 anos) na educação superior - ES no Brasil com o crescimento desta população no período de 2011/2016. **Método:** Foram utilizados dados públicos do censo da educação superior de 2011 a 2016 do INEP/MEC. Os dados populacionais dos grupos etários investigados para o mesmo período foram obtidos no sítio do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. **Resultados:** O índice de envelhecimento aumentou quase 30%, enquanto as matrículas na ES de pessoas maduras aumentaram mais do que a população deste grupo etário, sendo o maior aumento na faixa acima de 60 anos. As instituições privadas responderam por 4/5 das matrículas. **Conclusões:** a inclusão de pessoas na maturidade na ES pode contribuir para o processo de promoção de sua saúde.

Descritores: Educação superior; Envelhecimento; Promoção de saúde.

ABSTRACT

Objective: we compared the insertion of mature persons (≥ 40 years) in higher education - HE in Brazil with the growth of this population in the period of 2011/2016. **Method:** Public data of the INEP/MEC census of higher education from 2011 to 2016 was used. The population data of the age groups investigated for the same period was obtained from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. **Results:** The aging index increased by almost 30%, but enrollments in the HE of mature people increased more than the population of this age group, and the largest increase being in the range over 60 years. Private institutions accounted for 4/5 enrollments. **Conclusion:** The inclusion of people at maturity in HE can contribute to the process of promoting their health.

Descriptors: Higher education; Aging; Health promotion.

ORIGINAL

Introduction

The population aging and increased longevity, evidenced by demographic and epidemiological data, are a prominent worldwide phenomenon.¹ Between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of elderly people over 60 in the Brazilian population increased from 9.8% to 14.3%.² By 2050, there will be 64 million people over 60 in the country, which will correspond to 30% of the population.¹

This reality refers to a paradigm shift, inserted in a very important social and economic context. The construction of a society with active aging requires the adoption of new strategies to contribute in the construction of favorable environments for economic development and, specially, human and social development for all. People, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or social status must have a complete and global education that allows the real development of each one, so the social transformation and evolution really occur.³ In this context stand out the educational, work and health areas, which must involve the necessary adaptations inserted in all stages of life.¹

Several studies corroborate the relevance of the level of education for active aging.⁴⁻⁸ According to Satz⁹, education contributes to the development of the Functional Reserve - or Cognitive Reserve - hypothetical concept corresponding to the ability to attenuate, in cognitive abilities, the effects of neural decline associated with aging. In fact, cognitive functions vary widely among people and are closely related to years of education.¹

In Brazil, according to PNAD-IBGE data, in 2013 the average number of years of study of people over 60 years was only 4.8 years, with the highest percentages being concentrated in the groups "with 4 to 8 years of education" (34.8% of the elderly) and "without education and less than 1 year of study" (27.3% of the population).¹⁰ Despite the PNAD's monitoring of several indicators of Brazilian living conditions, there are no published data on the insertion of people at maturity, that is, those over 40 years of age, and especially of the elderly - over 60 years - in higher education.¹⁰

The present study aims to investigate the insertion of mature people in public and private higher education in Brazil from 2011 to 2016, comparing it with the growth of this population in the same period, aiming to subsidize the discussion about the role of higher education in the life of this age group.

Method

This is a time-series, documentary type study based on secondary data. Data on enrollment in higher education were obtained from the INEP / MEC census of higher education from 2011 to 2016, available on the website of the National Institute of Education and Research Anísio Teixeira of the Ministry of Education¹¹ and the population data of the age groups investigated for the same period were obtained on the website of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics¹²⁻¹³, accessed between January 20 and April 10, 2018.

Population data, the number of enrollments in higher education and their percentage distribution in public and private education, in the age groups of 40-49 years, 50-59 years and 60 years or more were investigated. The Aging

Index (IE60) was also calculated by means of the quotient between the population aged over 60 years and those aged less than 15 years.¹⁴ This index allows the identification of changes in the age structure of the population over the years. For the monitoring of the variation of the population and the number of enrollments, the Fixed-Base Index (IBF) notation was used, and the value of 100.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

Results

The population of Brazil increased by around 4% in the period under investigation, while the number of people enrolled in higher education grew by around 20% (Table 1). The aging rate increased by almost 30% from 2011 to 2015, from 52% to 66%. The number of matriculations at maturity in private institutions was around 4 to 5 times higher than in public institutions during the years investigated. While enrollment in private HEIs increased by about 20% (from around 500,000 to around 600,000 enrollments), enrollment in public institutions increased by only 6% (from 123,000 to 131,000).

Table 1- Population of the studied age groups and the country, age index, number of enrollments in HEI of the age groups studied and the country and type of HEI, according to the year investigated.

						REGISTRATIONS SES (Thousand registrations) ¹					
YEAR	AGE GROUP (Years) ⁴				IE ₆₀ ³	AGE GROUP (Years) ⁴		60 o u m a i s	% DE REGISTRATIONS PER TYPE OF HEI ^{2*}		
	From 40 to 49	From 50 to 59	From 60 or more	TOTAL BRAZIL		From 40 to 49	50 a 59		TOTAL BRAZIL	Public	Private
2011	26.579	20.850	23.857	197.825	52%	474	131	17	6.740	20%	80%
2012	26.539	21.293	25.486	198.660	56%	491	137	28	7.038	21%	79%
2013	26.890	21.756	26.252	200.455	59%	500	142	20	7.306	20%	80%
2014	27.619	22.633	27.564	202.195	63%	540	155	22	7.828	18%	82%
2015	27.926	23.452	28.499	203.880	66%	548	160	24	8.027	18%	82%
2016	28.347	24.274	29.566	205.511	nd*	547	159	25	8.049	18%	82%

¹Source: IBGE, PNAD 2011:2016.

²Source: INEP/MEC, 2018.

³IE60: Aging Index.

⁴Number of people in each age group

*nd – data unavailable in data bases

**Higher Education Institution

Compared with the year 2011, the number of people enrolled in higher education maturity increased more than the growth of this population in the period investigated (Figure 1A), for all age groups studied (Figures 1B, 1C and 1D). The largest increase, of more than 40%, occurred in the enrollment of the elderly. In the data of the survey of the INEP of 2012 an outlier value was identified, that presented a great distance from the other data of the year (Figure 1D).

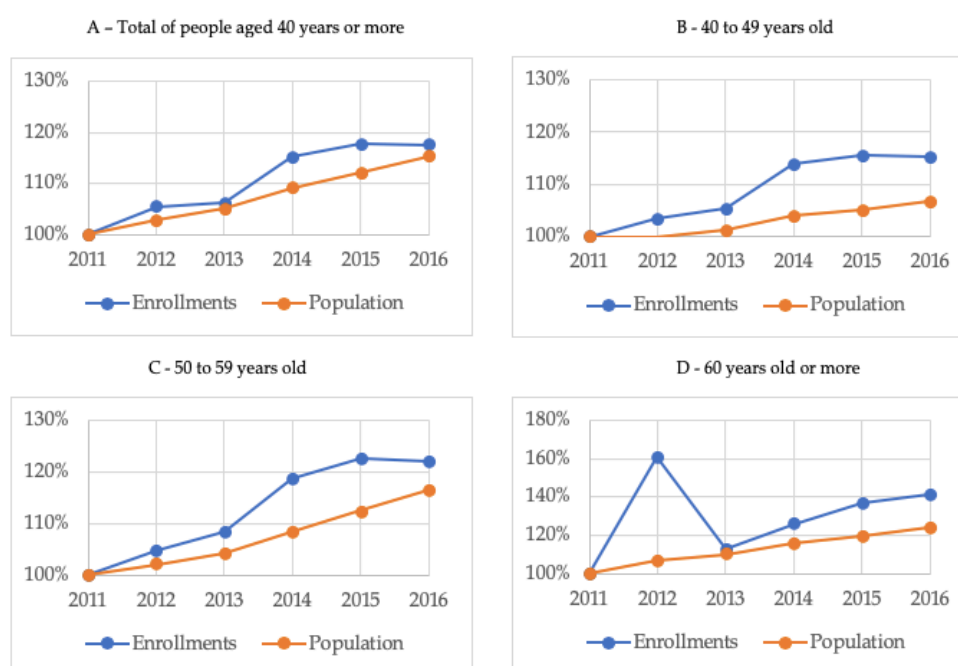


Figure 1 - Evolution of the number of enrollments in higher education and of the population by age group, based on the IBF of 2011 = 100.

Discussão

The increase of almost 30% of the aging index (SI) in the six years investigated points to the rapid and increasing aging of the Brazilian population. Developed to observe the evolution of the aging rhythm, IE is calculated in developed countries, considering the percentage of people over 65 in the population and, in developing countries, considering the percentage over 60 years. Respecting the Statute of the Elderly¹⁸, the IE calculation was used considering 60 years or more as the reference age. The use of this criterion does not allow comparisons with the values made available by the IBGE in its electronic website, which adopted the age of 65 years or more for the calculation (although in the definition of index the age of cutoff for developing countries is indicated).

Matrices of people at maturity occur mostly in private institutions, not differing from the reality of higher education in the country. Brazil follows the worldwide trend of high growth in private provision that has been occurring over the last few years, a situation that prompts discussion about the availability of vacancies, access to these vacancies and who occupies them.¹⁹ Facilitated access to private higher education, due to the greater increase in ENEM's own and independent selection of vacancies and selection methods, recent financing systems such as the FIES, a possible improvement in economic conditions in old age in the last decade and the high competition for vacancies in public institutions are factors that can contribute to the choice of private HEI in maturity, deserving further investigation.

The finding that the number of people in the maturity enrolled in higher

education increased more than the growth of this population in the same period (Figure 1) is relevant and surprising, especially in the age group of the elderly. Despite the outlier perceived in the year 2012, due to a considerable increase of enrollments followed by decrease in the following year, the other values showed continuous growth over the years studied. The educational system has a structure geared towards the younger generations, but the fact is that the demand for higher education by mature people has been growing in recent years. Some reasons for people already in the maturity to seek ES can be pointed out, such as the achievement of the first graduation, the diversification of retirement activities, coexistence with other generations, the development of new potentialities, among others. For people experiencing maturity, exercising emancipatory education at the most advanced levels of schooling enables the current reflections of a globalized society and in constant changes, giving maturity subsidies to intervene in the construction of public policies that favor an active aging process.³

The struggle for the (re) insertion of the aged subject in society, even if this society discards it through aging, can find in education a space to develop its potentialities, awakening to new learning.²⁰ Another fact that deserves note is that 75% of students old people entering the Higher Education College complete the higher education course.²¹ Although it is recognized that education is at the service of productive activity, geared towards vocational training, there is concern about education capable of overcoming work and production, being at the service of the man in his ongoing process of awareness and endless personal growth. Motivation for education thus becomes one of the interesting reasons why this public has been seeking formal higher education.²²

However, in spite of these data, the access of the elderly to higher education, considering the contingent of mature people who attend this level, is still restricted, mainly in what concerns the public institutions. The incentive to occupy these places is concentrated in youth, still considered the core of labor market production and concentration.²³⁻²⁵

The inclusion of maturity in education also fosters interaction between different generations. It is important that the elderly maintain an intergenerational social contact, culminating in the exchange of experiences, to enable a better understanding of the transformations of the world, expanding knowledge and social relations. The contributions are not limited to the individual sphere, but also bring benefits to the academic community, in which the insertion of old age allows for rich coexistence between generations, encouraging even more respect for diversity and enabling one to learn to live together harmoniously.

Conclusion

Education is considered as a strategy for the promotion of health during the process of healthy aging, contributing for the aging subject to continue being autonomous and independent, with physical, mental and social well-being. The inclusion of people in higher education maturity, specifically in regular courses, is of fundamental importance for the process of health promotion in this age group, and intergenerational exchange will generate greater well-being for the entire community within the university, through new

values and expectations.

Much has been discussed on the issue of racial quotas and quotas from public schools. It is suggested that the inclusion of people in maturity in higher education, especially those seeking the first graduation in public universities, be included in the agenda under discussion. As a proposal for future studies, it is indicated the analysis of the first graduation of people over 60 years and a study about their reasons and expectations.

The university, which must attend to different profiles and interests, contributing to the socio-cultural development through studies and research, with the universalization of knowledge, increasingly needs to meet its innovation principle, adapting to the new needs that arise over the years. Therefore, there should be no university funding, since it is embedded in a society that lives in transmutation.

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