

The orthodontist's profile in Minas Gerais

Luiz Fernando Eto¹, Valéria Matos Nunes de Andrade²

Objective: Due of the growing number of orthodontists and courses in Orthodontics, interest has grown in having a profile of these practitioners in Minas Gerais state (Brazil), showing how do they work in order to promote excellence in orthodontics, showing the most used techniques, the changes in the target public, and other views that impact on the future of the specialty and professional groups.

Methods: Questionnaires were sent to all orthodontists registered with the Regional Council of Dentistry of Minas Gerais (Conselho Regional de Odontologia de Minas Gerais, CRO-MG) until March 30, 2005, consisting of 722 professionals. Questionnaires were sent back by 241 (33%) professionals.

Conclusions: This study clarified some relevant aspects about the profile of orthodontists in Minas Gerais regarding their individuality, training and the techniques used. The patient base was composed mainly of teenagers (33.75%) and young adults (27.45%), with referral predominantly by the patients themselves (46.79%). Among the most important facts, we can mention the lack of use of some individual protection equipment, with only 37.76% using all the features of biological safety. Final exams have been requested less frequently than initial records, and findings from the literature review is even more frightening, considering the importance of these records. Looking at the future of the profession, optimistic orthodontists did not exceed half (45%) of participants.

Keywords: Orthodontics practice. Orthodontics in Minas Gerais state. Orthodontics in Brazil.

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¹ Specialist and MSc in Orthodontics, PUC-Minas. Assistant Professor of Orthodontics, University of Itauna. Former-president of the Brazilian Association of Lingual Orthodontics (2006-2010).

² Specialist in Orthodontics, Univale. MSc in Orthodontics, São Leopoldo Mandic.

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Contact address: Luiz Fernando Eto
Rua Ceará, 1431 – sala 1302 – Bairro Funcionários – Belo Horizonte / MG
Zip code: 30150-311 – E-mail: ortoeto@globo.com

Editor's abstract

The knowledge of a particular professional area provides important information for professionals, both in practice and newcomers, regarding the demand and manner of work, trends and changes that may occur in the target audience. The objective of this study was to evaluate orthodontists working in the state of Minas Gerais (Brazil) as far as it concerns to the occupational data, patient demand, technique, work philosophy and vision for the future of the profession. For this purpose, questionnaires were sent to all dentists registered in the Regional Council of Dentistry of Minas Gerais (CRO-MG) by March 2005, a total of 722 professionals. Of these, only 241 (33%) participated in the survey. It was observed that 71.8% of orthodontists were male, mean age of 39 years, and 75.9% were married. Most professionals (96.7%) were self-employed, and 40% of these had

more than 10 years in practice. Adolescents (10-17 years old) constituted 33.75% of patients, followed by young adults (17-30 years old) with 27.45%; children consisted of only 19.85% and adults, 18.98%. Patient referral comes mostly from the patients themselves (46.79%), followed by fellow dentists (24.26%). The Edgewise Straight-Wire technique was the most used (73.4%), 35.3% used the Standard Edgewise technique and 13.7%, Ricketts-Bioprogessive. The authors concluded that the target audience of the orthodontist in the state of Minas Gerais is comprised mostly of teenagers, and the referral of new patients occurs primarily by the patient. Moreover, the final records have been requested less frequently than the original. It should be noted that only 45% of orthodontists present themselves optimistic about the future of the profession.

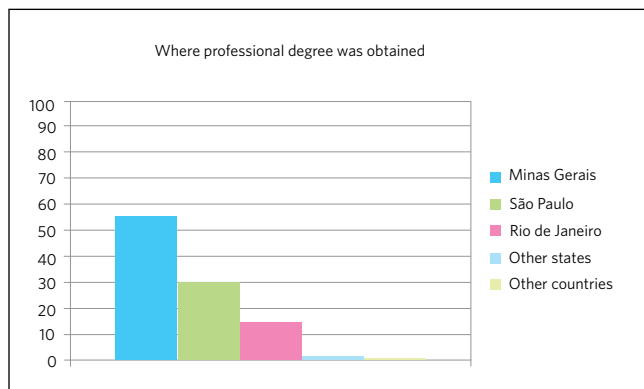


Figure 1 - Distribution of the sample according to where professional degree was obtained.

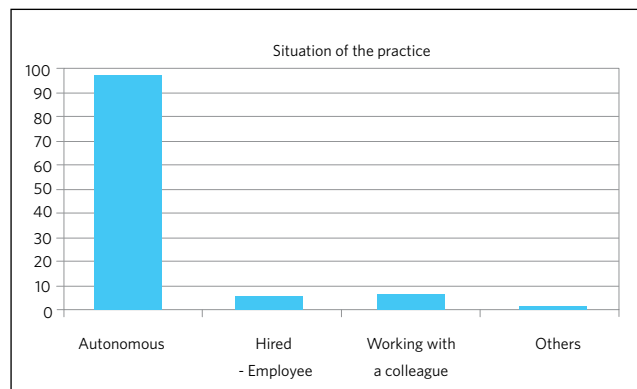


Figure 2 - Distribution of the sample according to the situation of the practice.