

About nutrition research methods

By inaugurating a Thematic Section in December of 2006¹ publishing the reflections on the I Seminar for Department Heads in Graduate Studies in Nutrition, the Brazilian Journal of Nutrition rectified the purpose of presenting itself as a space to publish qualified scientific production generated by Brazilian Graduate programs in Nutrition.

The I Seminar for Department Heads in Graduate Studies in Nutrition was founded in June of 2006 in the city of *Salvador* by the Graduate Program in Nutrition of the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* in partnership with the Food, Nutrition and Health Program of the *Universidade Federal da Bahia*^{2,3}.

As a consequence of this initial movement, other national meetings took place: in *Recife*, 2007, organized by the Graduate Program in Nutrition of the *Universidade Federal de Pernambuco*⁴, and in *Brasília*, 2008, organized by the Graduate Nutrition Programs of the *Universidade de Brasília* and *Universidade Federal de Viçosa*.

The historical meeting of coordinators covered many issues regarding the assessment process of the National Graduate Studies System, especially the quality and relevance of the scientific knowledge produced in the fields of Food and Nutrition, scope of the Graduate Programs in Nutrition that compose the area. Generally, the Seminar proposed itself to promote the integration of the Graduate Programs in Nutrition including organizing them into an association for the field to gain political strength².

A strategy that has been extensively discussed regards the search for methodological qualification of the research projects, basic requirement for the scientific production to become solid domestically and abroad and to consolidate the formation of masters and doctors. This resulted in the proposal to create a Seminar to discuss methodological issues in Nutrition research².

Thus, the I Seminar on Graduate Methods in Nutrition Studies was organized within the activities of the IX Brazilian Congress on Nutrition, organized by the *Sociedade Brasileira de Alimentação e Nutrição* (SBAN), in October of 2007. The seminar lasted 12 hours and the activities were distributed among two conferences and four round tables totaling 10 presentations of renowned researchers of the four main areas: nutritional epidemiology, food science and technology, clinical nutrition and biochemical nutrition.

The content of the presentations of that event and the participation of speakers motivated the Brazilian Journal of Nutrition, once more, to make the main contents of the I Seminar in Graduate Methods in Nutrition Studies available in two Thematic Sections dedicated to the subject.

With a recent history dating back 40 years, the development of the field of Nutrition in Brazil^{5,6} has experienced significant advances. The result of this course is seen by the growth in the number of publications on nutrition and by its broadening spectrum in the world scene. Recently, the Brazilian Journal of Nutrition has been included in two of the most expressive databases of international data: *Scopus*, in 2007, and *Web of Science* (ISI/Thomson-Reuters), in 2008.

This first part of the Thematic Section on Nutrition Research Methods presents three studies that expose the investigative paths of distinct subareas of Nutrition knowledge to the reader.

In the article *Methodological Proposal for the Food Intake Module of the Brazilian Household Budget Survey, POF*, Edna M. Yokoo and associates describe the methodological stages used to estimate POF 2008/2009 consumption. The importance of this type of investigation resides on the fact that the only

national study on direct consumption was done 30 years ago, in 1974-1975 (National Family Expenditure Study - ENDEF). Thus, the information on food consumption to be collected by POF 2008/2009 will provide better knowledge of the nutritional situation of Brazilian families. Furthermore, the difficulty to carry out population dietary studies is known, given its complexity and high cost⁷, and the population of a study on these methods will serve as support for future initiatives of the same nature.

In another line, the authors Dulcinea S.P. Abdalla and Karine C.M. Sena, in the study *Lipid Peroxidation Biomarkers in Atherosclerosis* relate the analytical techniques of lipoprotein oxidation and the distinct methods involved in choosing biomarkers to study atherosclerosis. They also emphasize the need to choose carefully the most adequate method to answer the question asked. The monitoring of these indicators is a very valuable tool in the process of preventing chronic diseases.

Finally, in the third article, *Nutrition in the post-genome era: 'omic' tools basics and applications*, authored by Eliane Fialho, Fernando S. Moreno and Thomas P. Ong, the main types of techniques used in a new Nutrition Research field are defined, that is, studies in the field of genomics. With its innovative character, nutrigenomics focuses on investigating the gene-nutrient interaction. The possibility of using this technique in nutrition research marks one more advance in the identification of biomarkers to subsidize the establishment of specific dietary recommendations to prevent diseases.

The repercussions of the I Seminar in Graduate Methods in Nutrition Studies project positive outcomes. Thus, the II Seminar in Graduate Methods in Nutrition Studies will be done during the next SBAN National Nutrition Congress, in 2009, in order to continue the plans to technically strengthen the knowledge produced by the Graduate Programs in Nutrition.

The next issue of the journal (Rev. Nutr. vol. 22, n.1, Jan./Fev., 2009), three articles on different nutrition research methods that will conclude this theme have already been approved. They are: *Studying the Central Control of Food Intake and Obesity in Rats*, by Eliane B. Ribeiro; *Qualitative Researches in Nutrition and Food*, by Ana M. Canesqui; and *Assessment of the impact of nutrition programs*, by Iná S. Santos.

With the publication of the results of the I Seminar in Graduate Methods in Nutrition Studies in two Thematic Sections, the Brazilian Journal of Nutrition hopes to contribute to the advance of Nutrition knowledge in its many subareas, rectifying its editorial policy which is compromised with scientific rigor and acknowledged by its peers.

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Maria Angélica Tavares de Medeiros
Scientific Editor

Gilberto Kac
Coordinator, Seminar in Graduate Studies in Nutrition