SPEECH EXPERTISE: KNOWLEDGE AND THE PERFORMANCE BY PROFESSIONALS OF SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND HEARING SCIENCE IN TWO BRAZILIAN STATES

Perícia fonoaudiológica: conhecimento e atuação dos profissionais da fonoaudiologia de dois estados do brasil

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: to analyze the knowledge and the performance in speech-language pathology assessment by professionals in two Brazilian states. **Method**: the study was conducted with 71 male and female speech therapists, aged 21 to 52, working in the states of Bahia and Parana. Their knowledge and performance in speech-language pathology assessment was estimated by applying a questionnaire. **Results**: we found that 94.4% of the interviewees are female, aged on average 28 years, graduated for no more than 5 years, and 59.2% of them have post-graduate certificates. Most of the individuals did not have any contact with assessment during their graduation and few of them took courses on the theme after the completion of the undergraduate programs. Analyzing the other data collected, we verified that the knowledge of the studied population is insufficient in this field and that the speech therapist's performance in assessment is rather restricted. **Conclusion**: more research and the inclusion of a course on Assessment in Speech-Language Pathology undergraduate and/or graduate programs are extremely important, for assessment was found to be little studied, resulting in a scarse knowledge of it by professionals, which leads to its very restricted conduction among professionals in the area.

KEYWORDS: Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences; Knowledge; Professional Practice Location; Professional Competence; Expert Testimony

INTRODUCTION

The Speech, Language and Hearing Area is the health science responsible for prevention, diagnosis,

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counseling, treatment, monitoring and improvement of issues related to human communication, such as peripheral and central hearing, vestibular function, oral and written language, speech articulation, voice, fluency, swallowing and system miofunctional and cervical. It is a new science compared to other health professions, but with a possibility to act with newborns until seniors. It is present in hospitals, maternity hospitals, ambulatory care, nursing homes, education, industry, media and art, aesthetics and justice, whereas this latter referred to this research¹.

In the judicial area, we have the expertise, which aim to explain certain technical aspects. It recognized as an examination of situations or facts that relate to things and people, performed by a specialist in the area that you are submitted². It is a subsidiary element, originating from an auxiliary

of justice for the valuation or proof solution aimed at discovery of truth. The judicial authority has to decide diverse and complex causes, need to know all the specialties of human knowledge, if that is not possible, thus justifying the need for courts to resort to professional experts in different areas of knowledge^{3, 4}.

The professional expert can act in five areas: administrative, judicial, criminal, technical assistance and extraiudicial.

The administrative expertise can happen in public departments, such as the application of social security benefits, where the employee must pass a skill to achieve improvement and in private organizations, such as private insurers, where the client must pass to receive a skill compensation contemplated in your policy. This type of expertise there is not a normative model to be followed5.

The expert who works in the area of administrative expertise makes agreements and internal demands in public or private institutions, as assessments admission professionals will work in risk functions vocal or auditory, and participation in joint medical expert of working capacity. In this case, the term expertise was inadequate because the word refers to the legal area, whose realization can determine by judicial authority. In the case of health plans, the appropriate word would be "evaluation" or "audit"6,7.

The literature suggests that a legal expert is a mean test that aims to clarify the judge over disagreements involving technical knowledge. It produced in a court case to decide disputed facts brought by the parties, for example, an employee who drives the justice to require compensation for hearing loss induced by occupational noise. In this case, the judge may appoint a specialist in the area to investigate and prove the facts, has given their opinion5.

The criminal expertise may be Civil or Federal. It performed by a civil official who works exclusively for the state, as in cases of need for the individual identification by voice, through telephone recordings, audio or video⁷. The voice of a hijacker, for example, it can be identified to confirm participation in the same crime.

The technical assistance occurs when everyone involved in the process requesting the participation of a professional to monitor the work done by an expert. The technical assistant aims to defend the interests of people involved who hired and in this case, may submit questions to be answered by the expert and still follow the procedures performed by person involved, and can offer their critical opinion on the report of the expert8.

Finally, extrajudicial expertise is applied on occasions when it is needless to state presence through the Judiciary. Follows the same principle of legal experts, however differs when it comes to the technical assistant, because if the person involved agrees to accept the results presented by the expert shall not be required to participate in the technical assistant, becoming a process faster and cheaper than judicial expertise7.

A professional is considered an expert when it specializes in a particular field or subject, has experience or skills in a particular activity9.

The expert is a participant and partly responsible for the sentence to which the judge will come later. and that will influence the life of humans. It should feel safe to act in an impartial manner, recording the reality neutrally and without favors, reporting it directly and unequivocally to reach the conclusion10.

The expert acts is limited because it does not judge, does not argue and not accusing. The expert is responsible for examining and reporting facts of a specific and permanent need for clarification in a legal proceeding⁶.

Thus, we can conclude that every professional can be an expert, according to article 145, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP), which governs the expert must be a professional with a university degree and registration in the respective class identity. Therefore, the speech therapist is a professional who is able to perform skill that relates to your field of knowledge, a right guaranteed by the CCP, as well as the Code of Professional Ethics of the speech therapist who provides in its art. 25: "Any speech therapist, in the exercise of their profession, may be appointed expert to clarify the Court on matters within its competence." In addition to the Federal Council of Speech, Language and Hearing Therapy issued Resolution Nº 214/98 acting: "It is permitted Speech Therapists to act in judicial or extra-judicially as an expert in matters within its competence."5.

Research shows that the market segment expertise and related areas are expanded significantly every day, but if you observe a few incursions of Brazilian speech therapists in the field of expertise. This gives us the impression of being a new area; however, is an area little known and exploited by speech therapists¹¹.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the knowledge and expertise of professional performance in two Brazilian states and expects to contribute to the dissemination of this area in order to expand the inclusion in this professional field of expertise.

METHOD

This is a study including 71 speech therapists, working in the states of Bahia and Paraná, selected randomly, without restriction as to time of graduation and professional area. They accepted to answer the questionnaire below on your knowledge and acting in speech expertise (Figure 1).

It was considered in this study as dependent variables knowledge, the skills of speech therapists working in both states and as independent variables, the occupational history (working time, area of expertise and ongoing research in the area) and socio-demographic (age, location and remuneration for the expertise service).

Identification Data		
Name:		
Gender:	Age:	
	pedalization.	
Questionnaire 1. Had you access with Expertise on S ☐ Yes ☐ No	Speech, Language and Hearing Science during your graduation?	
2. If yes, by what?		
☐ Lecture☐ Discipline at the graduation		
☐ Other:		
3. Have you made any course in this a ☐ Yes ☐ No	area?	
4. If yes, How many and How long?		
5. Regarding the title, what do you thi expert? Check how many alternatives Graduation in what area, with record Specialization in any area of Special Specialization Expertise I have doubts about that	rd class council	
6. What areas do you think the speed ☐ Audiology ☐ Language ☐ Orofacial Motricity ☐ Public Health ☐ Voice	h, language and hearing therapist can act as Expert?	
	guage and hearing therapist has no legal knowledge to act as an	
7. If you think that the speech, language (s) of Speech, Language and Hearing	age and hearing therapist can work as an expert in some (s) area g Science exemplifies how:	
8. Have you worked (or still works) as ☐ Yes ☐ No	s an expert?	

9. If yes, what kind of expertise? ☐ Judicial ☐ Extrajudicial ☐ Administrative ☐ Technical Assistance ☐ I don't know
 10. Have you ever been asked to make reports or expert opinions? □ No, I have never been called, but if it was, promptly meet the request. □ No, I have never been called, and if refuse, because I have no experience in the field. □ Yes, I have invited me, but as he had no experience in the area, refused the request. □ Yes, but I was called few times. □ Yes, I was called. □ Other:
11. If you have been called, in which the area was?
 12. Why were you asked? □ I was called at random because I am a speech, language and hearing therapist. □ I was called because I am a speech, language and hearing therapist for a company. □ I was called because disseminate my work to the Judges of my city. □ I was called to be the only speech, language and hearing therapist in my town. □ Other:
 13. Regarding the labor market, for the speech, language and hearing therapist to be included in the expert area, you believe: ☐ Should be selected in competition to act as an expert. ☐ Should disclose their performance with the judges of their city. ☐ Other:

Figure 1 – Questionnaire about Speech Expertise

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the institution, under protocol number 118/09. All speech therapists agreed to participate voluntarily accepting procedures, confirming that they brought no personal or occupational damage. The Term of Free and Informed Consent Form (TFICF) was applied according to the criteria established by Resolution 196/96 of the National Health¹².

Statistical analysis was performed using the chi-square test with a significance level set at 0,05 (5%).

RESULTS

71 speech therapists participated in this study, 47 (66,2%) working in the State of Bahia and 24 (33,8%) in Paraná. Of the total sample, 67 (94,4%) individuals are female and four (5,6%) were male. The age of population ranged 21-52 years, mean 28,9 years and standard deviation of 6,8 years. The variation in the time of graduation of professionals: 51 graduates up to five years (71,8%), 11 (15,5%), six to 10 years and nine (12,7%) for more than 10 years. Most of the participants, 44 (62%), have post-graduation, and this finding was statistically significant when compared with age. Therefore, the proportion of those who have specialization course is significantly higher for individuals aged 30 years or more (Table 1).

The post-graduation courses are distributed among five areas of speech, language and hearing therapy and some related areas, being the most cited Audiology Area (Table 2).

Regarding knowledge on expertise acquired during graduation, the total of 71 therapists studied, 63 (88,7%) reported no information and only eight (11,3%) had some knowledge on the subject, all with less than five years of graduation, four from Bahia and four from Paraná.

Those who reported having received some knowledge, six (75%) were through lectures, one (12,5%) in internship and one (12,5%) obtained

Table 1 – Relationship between age and specialization course (N=71)

ACE	SPECIAL			
AGE -	No	YES	р	
Less than 30 years	27	25	0,0001*	
30 years or more	-	19		

Source: The author.

Note: Chi-square test = p<0,05.

Table 2 - Individuals who hold a post-graduate degree, divided by area (N=44)

Area of Pos-Graduation	Amount of % Citations		
Audiology	21	47,7	
M.O.	6	13,6	
Voice	6	13,6	
Collective Health	3	6,8	
Language	3	6,8	
Neurology	3	6,8	
Mental Health	1	2,3	
Special Education	1	2,3	

Source: The author.

information in the classroom. When asked if they enrolled in some course in the area, 64 (90,1%) did not do any course and only seven (9,9%) reported having had, and this increased demand by professionals from Bahia, represented by six professionals. It observed that the seven professionals who have enrolled in a course, they all did recently, between zero and five years.

When asked about the minimum degree required for professional work as an expert, it observed that the majority believes it is necessary to have a specialization course in expertise (32,4%), and other results are presented in Table 3.

Regarding to the knowledge that professionals have about the areas in which the speech therapists can act as an expert, 100% scored some area, while 29 (40,85%) answered all areas, followed Audiology and Voice, reported by 17 (23,94%) participants. The rest is divided among five areas of speech-language and hearing therapy. However, when they were asked if they would know exemplify the ways could act in several areas, 23 (32,4%) were unable to give an example.

Regarding the speech expertise, only six (8,5%) reported having worked in the area, and of this total, two as technical assistant (54,5%), two as an expert and technical assistant (54,5%), an as an judicial expert (16,7%) and as an extrajudicial expert

(16,7%). When comparing the expertise acting with the age of the participants, it appears that there is significant dependence between age and acting as an expert. Therefore, the proportion who acted as an expert is significantly higher in the group aged 30 years or more. (Table 4)

Analyzing the answers of the questionnaires regarding the execution of reports or expert opinions: there was only one (1,4%) is always called; five (7%) were sometimes called; four (5,6%) were requested but as they had no experience in the area refused the request; 27 (38%) were never called, but if they were called would accept the request and 34 (47,9%) were never called, but if they were called would refuse, because they consider not have experience in the area.

Considering the data collected on call to act on expertise, it observed that 10 (14,1%) answered yes. These 10, four (40%) were called by names of other professionals, three (30%) randomly for being speech therapists, two (20%) were being called by speech therapists company and only one (10%) was called because of the disclosure acting with the judges of their city.

Table 3 – What the speech therapist need to act on expertise (N=71)

Prerequisite	Amount of Citations	%
Only specialization in Expertise	23	32,4
Have doubt about it	13	18,3
Graduation with record class council	12	16,9
Graduation with record class council, specialization in any area of Speech Expertise	8	11,3
Graduation with record class council and specialization in Expertise	5	7,0
Graduation with record class council and specialization in any area of Speech, Language and Hearing Science	5	7,0
Only specialization in any area of Speech, Language and Hearing Science	4	5,6
Specialization in any area of Speech, Language and Hearing Science and Expertise	1	1,4

Source: The author.

Table 4 – Relationship between age and acting as an expert

ACE	ACTING AS	NA EXPERT	_	
AGE	No	Yes	þ	
Less than 30 years	51	1	0,0011*	
30 years or more	14	5		

Source: The author.

Note: Chi-square test = p<0,05.

DISCUSSION

The data from this study indicate the prevalence of professional females, confirming a Brazilian reality also pointed searches performed in the State of Paraíba and the city of Salvador in Bahia where he met predominance of female professionals working in Speech, Language and Hearing Science^{13, 14}.

As for the age and time of graduation, found a mean age of 28,9 years with a mean of 4,9 years of graduation, and these results were also found in a survey of speech therapists from Bahia¹³.

Most of participants, even with little time graduation course, it has post-graduation. This data reveals the interest of professionals to upgrade, which is similar to the data obtained in applied research in the State of Bahia¹³. Regarding the prevalence of postgraduate among individuals aged 30 years or more there are no studies in the literature that would allow discuss this relationship.

This study reveals that only 8.5% of the professionals surveyed have worked in expertise. This confirms in accordance with the literature that the market segment of expertise is growing; however, there is little expansion in the Brazilian Speech, Language and Hearing Science regarding this specific area¹¹.

Most of participants (88,7%) had no contact with expertise during graduation, which related with a survey conducted in Higher Education Institutions in Southern Brazil, where 75% of the institutions in this region do not offer one a discipline to work with expertise in Speech, Language and Hearing Science.

The aspects related to the participant's knowledge of expertise, such as speech therapy and the degree needed for any professional working in this area, there is little knowledge on the part of the individuals surveyed. According to the literature, most professionals do not feel able to mention the main duties of an expert in speech, language, and hearing science and possibilities of working in this market7.

The results of this study show the legal expertise in the areas of hearing and voice in the occupational sector, as the best known. This finding is similar to the literature indicating that speech, language and hearing science act only in the judiciary, in the area of occupational audiology. In addition, does not know the speech therapist participation in administrative expertise, such as how the joints medical expert in public service⁷.

This study found that the experience in the area of expertise in Speech. Language and Hearing Science is still very restricted, since only 8,5% of the professionals questioned work or have worked in the area, which explains also the lack of professionals on the subject.

The classification for expert work in the area, the majority (83,1%) showed ignore it or believe that the professional needs of other titles, beyond graduation and enrollment in the class council to act, confirming the lack of professionals on area and its laws. According to the literature, for the performance of professional as an expert is only required to graduate and register with the class council⁵.

The study shows a lack of preparation and insecurity of professionals surveyed who worked in this area: 47, 9% of individuals stated that, if asked to act as an expert not accepted because of lack of preparation and 5, 6% have been requested and did not accept the same reason. According to a survey of speech therapists recent graduates of the State of Rio de Janeiro, the expertise is an area where fewer speech therapists intend to act¹⁷.

There is need for speech therapists work in the area of expertise, but there is a lack of competition

for the inclusion of these professionals and the need to increase the dissemination of this work with the judges and prosecutors. In addition, speech therapists should upgrade to understand this area. In the absence or lack of speech therapists working on issues involving communication, other professionals end up filling this gap, as in the case of states that do not have speech therapists working in expert identification of speaker and thus, engineers, physicists, chemists, biologists and musicians end up exercising the function¹⁸.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates the importance of the inclusion of specific materials for area of expertise in speech, language and hearing area within the curriculum of graduation and post-graduation courses. It possible to demonstrate that expertise in speech-language and hearing area is a subject rarely discussed, so that the professionals have little knowledge on the subject and, consequently, the performance in this area has very restricted.

Although the analysis is limited to the states of Bahia and Paraná, the results point to the need for further studies on expertise, to contribute information and investigation of this branch of science that sets up another possibility of acting within the practice in speech, language and hearing therapy.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar o conhecimento e a atuação em perícia fonoaudiológica de profissionais atuantes em dois Estados brasileiros. Método: o estudo foi realizado com 71 fonoaudiólogos de ambos os gêneros com idade entre 21 a 52 anos, atuantes nos estados da Bahia e Paraná. O conhecimento e atuação na perícia fonoaudiológica foram avaliados por meio da aplicação de um questionário. Resultados: verificou-se que 94,4% dos indivíduos pesquisados são do gênero feminino, com média de idade de 28 anos, formados em sua maioria há no máximo cinco anos, sendo que 59,2% destes já possuem pós-graduação. A grande maioria dos indivíduos não teve contato com perícia durante a graduação e poucos buscaram cursos sobre o tema depois de formados. Analisando em conjunto os demais dados coletados, constatou-se que o conhecimento da população estudada é insuficiente nessa área e que a atuação do fonoaudiólogo em perícia é bastante restrita. Conclusão: a pesquisa e a inserção de matéria específica sobre Perícia Fonoaudiológica nos cursos de graduação e/ou pós-graduação são de suma importância, pois a perícia em fonoaudiologia mostrou-se um tema pouco abordado, fazendo com que os profissionais tenham um escasso conhecimento sobre o mesmo, levando a uma atuação muito restrita dentre os profissionais da área.

DESCRITORES: Fonoaudiologia; Conhecimento; Área de Atuação Profissional; Competência Profissional; Prova Pericial

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