



December 9th - Speech-Language Pathologist Day: between history and contemporary challenges

9 de dezembro - Dia do Fonoaudiólogo: entre a história e os desafios contemporâneos

9 de diciembre – Día del Logopeda: entre la historia y los desafíos contemporâneos

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Dear Editors-in-Chief of the Revista Distúrbios da Comunicação,

Speech-Language Pathologist Day, celebrated on December 9th, invites reflection that goes beyond commemoration. We believe it is also an opportunity to revisit a historical journey and reaffirm commitments to the present and future of the profession. In Brazil, the legal framework that officially recognizes the professional practice, Law No. 6,965/1981¹, consolidated competencies, fields of action and established the system of councils for ethical-professional guidance and supervision, a pillar of the identity and technical autonomy of the area.

The trajectory that culminated in the 1981 Law was guided by different matrices such as medicine, psychology, linguistics, phonetics, and acoustic physics, in addition to educational and clinical experiences that preceded the full graduation in Speech-Language Pathology: from professors

specialized in voice and speech at the beginning of the 20th century to university courses in the 1960s and 1970s, until the official recognition of the first curricula and courses in the country².

Since then, in addition to maintaining its clinical and educational base, Speech-Language Pathology has expanded its insertion in networks and public policies, especially in the Unified Health System (SUS) and in Primary Care, Strategy and Support Center for Family Health / Multiprofessional Teams (eMulti), incorporating technologies, interdisciplinary practices and the production of evidence on impact and effectiveness^{3,4}. Taking the commemorative date as a starting point allows us to articulate the past and present: celebrating achievements, recognizing challenges, and reflecting on future directions.

At the same time, contemporary challenges demand attention. The recent Decree No. 12,456/2025⁵, which resizes the supply of undergraduate health programs in the country (restrict-

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ing fully online courses and defining guidelines for blended learning models), reignites a central debate: training in Speech-Language Pathology demands practical experiences, supervision, and the development of clinical skills that are not fully reproduced in remote learning. It is imperative that the expansion of places preserves training standards and social responsibility for the quality of care provided to the population. On a historical-institutional level, the consolidation of the profession was achieved through the articulation between norms, entities, and ethics, from professional councils to the Code of Ethics, elements that continue to structure public trust in speech-language pathology practice. The normative trajectory not only formalized the profession but also outlined the technical and social contours of the practice and its commitment to science, rights, and quality of life.

To deal with the present, in turn, the traditional becomes more complex. It is necessary to: (a) consolidate the presence of speech-language pathologists at different levels of the health system, focusing on primary care and care networks; (b) qualify training based on evidence and active methodologies, ensuring ethical and supervised clinical experiences; (c) integrate technologies with critical thinking and clear guidelines; and (d) broaden the social recognition of the profession, communicating its impacts in different phases of the life cycle and contexts of vulnerability.

With this letter, we propose to the scientific community that Speech-Language Pathologist Day be a milestone of commitment to quality training, person-centered care, ethics, and the continuous qualified expansion of areas of practice, focusing on the benefit of the human right to communication. Valuing December 9th is, therefore, recognizing a profession that translates science into care, technique into empathy, and language into an instrument of citizenship. For the future, the challenges involve strengthening evidence-based training, the ethical and critical use of digital technologies, broader social recognition, and strategic insertion in new spaces, such as public communication, accessibility, and innovations in health. More than a commemorative date, December 9th inspires reflection, belonging, and commitment to the advancement of an essential and profoundly human profession.

References

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