

A Study on the Educational and Professional Trajectory of the Graduates from a Private University Institution in the City of Buenos Aires

Cristina M. Elizondo^{1, }, Alfredo Eymann^{2, }, Silvia Carrió^{3, }, Roberta Ladenheim^{4, }, Griselda Olivar⁵ and María Laura Eder^{6, }

1. Departamento de Investigación. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

2. Departamento Académico de Pediatría. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

3. Departamento de Bienestar Estudiantil. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

4. Departamento de Posgrado. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

5. Área de Graduados. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

6. Secretaría Académica. Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, Argentina

ABSTRACT

The evaluation of learning and its transfer to the professional life of graduates is a concern of educational institutions that fulfil the role of training professionals for society. We set out to explore the perceived relationship between the learning received and the professional trajectory of our graduates.

Cross-sectional study was carried out. Undergraduate and postgraduate graduates were included. A questionnaire was designed and sent electronically.

Of a total of 1,691 graduates, the questionnaire was sent to 1,446 and 410 (28.4%) completed it. 95.5% are currently working and 92.7% perceived that the training received was related to their current job. 91% agreed and strongly agreed that their theoretical training was adequate for their current professional task. 79% considered that the practical training was adequate for the task they currently perform.

51% currently carry out teaching activities, 36% research activities and 36% extension activities or knowledge transfer.

83% of graduates maintain academic, working and/or social relationships with their peers. The average score given to the training was 8.7 and 98.3% of the graduates would recommend a friend to study the degree they did at our university.

Most graduates considered that the theoretical and practical training received was adequate for their current professional tasks. The vast majority has work and it is related to their studies at the university.

Key words: Education Medical, Graduate, Education Medical, educational management, education research.

Author for correspondence: cristina.elizondo@hospitalitaliano.org.ar, Elizondo CM.

Received: 04/24/23 Accepted: 31/08/23 Online: 29/09/2023

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51987/revhospitalbaire.v43i3.272>

Cómo citar: Elizondo CM, Eymann A, Carrió S, Ladenheim R, Olivar G, Eder ML. A Study on the Educational and Professional Trajectory of the Graduates from a Private University Institution in the City of Buenos Aires. *Rev. Hosp. Ital. B.Aires.* 2023;43(3)121-127.

INTRODUCTION

Technology and the labor market have led professionals to extend their training and improve their skills to compete in the productive labor market¹. We have seen that the educational opportunities have grown more than the labor supply available to graduating professionals. This situation has forced them to look for educational programs that offer a competitive edge to increase their competitiveness and insertion into the labor market. Other authors have also described this complexity in the relationship between training and labor market insertion, agreeing on the relevance of the subject and the need for continued research²⁻⁴.

Labor market insertion after training depends greatly on the geographical area, with reports indicating that this occurs between 69 and 93% in European countries (5,6), 84% (7) in regions of Argentina, and 83% in Central America, among others². Berdaguer defined the professional trajectory as encompassing the intertwining of university studies and labor market insertion, continuing education, and work apprenticeships¹.

In short, the training received at university contributes knowledge for professional practice and the conformation of society in general⁸.

Although one of the specific functions of the university is the training of professionals, its relationship with the world of work is still a matter of interest and concern⁴.

One of the most important studies is CHEERS (Careers after Higher Education-an European Research Survey), which aims to relate training with professional careers in several European countries⁶. Currently, the international network for graduate follow-up continues with projects incorporating the concept of localization^{9,10}. In addition, several studies have attempted to understand the competencies that students value or identify as necessary for the world of work they wish to enter and the relationship between the training received and the job they obtained¹¹. That is a challenge to tackle with the particularities of each discipline and local environment. The information obtained is valuable input for universities to get feedback on their programs, update their academic offerings, and contribute to training professionals well-prepared for a world in continuous transformation.

The opinion of graduates regarding their training is also highly relevant and factored in when classifying universities in international rankings². In the health sciences, training, and professional practice are of utmost importance since professional education enables the practice of the profession to come. Whether the forms or models developed/proposed condition their professional development remains unclear.

Ours is a private university institution in Buenos Aires City, founded more than 20 years ago, and manages seven undergraduate degrees, 22 professional specialization degrees linked to residencies and scholarships, two open specialties, six master's degrees, and two doctorates. Its mission is to provide comprehensive training for

health professionals, stimulate continuous professional development, develop research, and promote community health, enhancing the social reality in which it is immersed².

Since not many studies exist in our region that investigate the professional development of graduates and their labor market insertion, we decided to explore the perceived relationship between their learnings and career path.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study, including all graduates and postgraduates of our university from 2001 to December 2020 for graduate degrees and September 2021 for postgraduate degrees.

At the time of the study, students were graduating with five out of six Bachelor's degrees, 19 out of the 24 postgraduate degrees, six Master's degrees, and one of the two doctoral degrees. This study included those who might belong to one or more graduate or postgraduate degree programs. For the analysis, we considered the responses provided in general when they had completed more than one training program in our institution.

We consolidated a database of graduates through our records, information provided by the management and authorities of the programs, graduate networks, and social networks.

We designed a questionnaire identifying domains of interest and determining its content validity through a review of the literature through the participation of three health professionals with training in medical education, two graduates in Education Sciences, and a student with a Communication Science degree.

We conducted an apparent validity test with seven health professionals and revised the questionnaire, eliminating or modifying questions to make it brief and easy to read. Reliability tests were not performed. We used the surveyMonkey® platform to build the data collection tool and circulate the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was sent to the graduates through emails and links to be answered via WhatsApp sometime between November 2021 and February 2022, with six reminders at regular intervals.

We analyzed the following variables of demographic data: gender (female, male, both, other, I'd rather not say), city of birth and city of current residence; work domain: aspects perceived by their employers (prestige, theoretical background, practical training, work experience, teamwork training, teaching team), job-related to the training received, employment search, workplace dependence (private, public, both), highest job position achieved; theoretical and practical training suitable for current job (strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree and strongly agree), teaching activities, research activities, extension or knowledge transfer activities, academic, work and/or social relations with peers, recommendation to a friend to study and overall rating of the training received (1 to 10). Aspects perceived

as valuable and to be improved of the training received.

We described the continuous variables as mean and standard deviation and the categorical variables as absolute numbers and proportions. Qualitative variables that did not provide pre-established categories were analyzed through iterative reading and triangulation by two health professionals with expertise in medical education to define categories for presentation.

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of University Research Protocols and funded by the Graduate Area of our university; however, this does not represent for researchers any conflict of interest with the results presented in the manuscript.

RESULTS

Out of the 1691 people who graduated during the study period, we sent the questionnaire to 1446, and 410 (28.4% of respondents) completed it.

Of the graduates, 65.5% were female, 39.5% were born in the Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (CABA), and 57.8% presently live there.

The other demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1. 196 graduates from degree programs responded to the questionnaire (response rate 24.4%) and 214 from postgraduate programs (response rate 33.2%). Most respondents from undergraduate courses belonged to medicine and those from postgraduate courses to specialization courses. Table 2 describes the characteristics of the different careers.

83% of the graduates completed only one training program at our University, and the remaining 17%

completed more than one program up to a maximum of 4 programs. 95.5% of the graduates had jobs underway, and 2.7% perceived that the training received was related to their current job. The University's prestige is the most valued attribute by their employers. Table 3 shows other employment characteristics and their relationship with the training.

91% agreed and strongly agreed that their theoretical training was adequate for their current professional task. 79% considered that practical training was appropriate for the job they are currently performing.

51% carry out teaching activities, 36% research activities, and 36% extension or knowledge transfer activities (Table 4). 83% maintain academic, work, and or social relationships with their peers.

The most valuable aspects perceived were access to practical activities and quality in theoretical activities and, among the aspects mentioned as areas for improvement, to include more hands-on activities. Table 5 shows all the categories defined.

The global score given to education had an average of 8.7 ± 1.1 ; in degree courses, it was 8.68 ± 1.27 , and for those who only took postgraduate courses, an average of 8.82 ± 1.07 . The 98.3% would recommend a friend to study the career they did at our University, 97% of those who did a degree course, and 99% of those who only did at least one postgraduate course.

DISCUSSION

Graduate follow-up is a relevant component of the academic management of universities. It makes it

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of graduates from a private university in Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. (n = 410)

		n	%
Gender	Masculin	266	64.9
	Feminin	141	33.3
	Non binary	1	0.2
	Other	1	0.2
	I'd rather not say	1	0.2
City of birth	*CABA	162	39.5
	Buenos Aires Province	99	24.1
	Rest of the country	106	25.8
	Foreign	43	10.5
City of residence	*CABA	237	57.8
	Buenos Aires Province	89	21.7
	Rest of the country	51	12.4
	Foreign	33	8

*CABA: Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.

Table 2. Persons graduated from degree and postgraduate courses at a private university in Buenos Aires City, Argentina. (n = 410)

Degree career	Graduates	Questionnaire sent	Total respondents	Percentage of respondents
Medicina	420	369	112	30.3
Bachelor of Nursing	428	320	34	10.6
Bachelor of Pharmacy	9	9	9	66.6
Biochemistry	24	24	17	70.8
Bachelor of surgical instrumentation	80	80	27	33.7
Postgraduate careers	13	13	10	76.9
Doctorate in Health Sciences	144	136	68	50
Master's Degrees	573	497	136	27.3
Specialization Careers	730	644	214	33.2
Subtotal	961	802	196	24.4

Table 3. Labor characteristics of graduates of a private university institution in Buenos Aires City, Argentina, and the relationship with their education. (n=410)

		n	%
Currently employed		392	95.6
Looking for a job		134	32.7
Predominant sector of employment	Private	260	63.4
	Public	72	17.5
	Both	78	19
The training received is related to the current job		380	92.7
What attribute do you think employers value	University Prestige	124	30.2
	Practical training	96	23.4
	Theoretical training	66	16.1
	Work experience during training	51	12.4
	Teamwork training	32	7.8
	Teaching team	12	3
	Other	29	7
Highest employment position achieved	Staff professional	160	39
	Work by service	75	18.3
	Area coordinator	57	13.9
	Service Coordinato	25	6.1
	Director of an organization	14	3.4
	Other	78	19

Table 4. Teaching, research and extension activities of graduates from a private university institution in Buenos Aires City, Argentina. (n = 410)

	n	%
Teaching activities	209	51
Level of teaching activities		
University	121	77,1
Higher, non-university	31	19,8
Secondary	5	2,4
Primary	1	0,5
Pre-school	1	0,5
Research activities	147	35,8
Extension or knowledge transfer activities	147	35,8

Table 5. Valuable aspects and areas for improvement as perceived by graduates from a private university institution in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

	n	%	Verbatim
Valuable aspects (n = 3 03)			
Quality in theoretical education	64	21.1	"Permanent thirst for knowledge and never giving up."
Access to hands-on activities	64	21.1	"The practical application of all of the contents of the course."
Humanistic perspective	46	15.2	"They have taught us the perspective of a humanized medicine."
Quality of the teaching team	39	12.9	"The regular contact with high quality professionals."
Learning to work in a team	25	8.2	"Teamwork, professionalism, ethical behavior, commitment and responsibility."
Institutional prestige	13	4.3	"It gives syou credit."
Tools for research	9	3	"Possibility to conduct my own research."
Aspects to improve (n = 241)			
More hands-on activities	65	27	"Carry out practical field activities."
No areas for improvement	62	25.7	"I can't find anything to improve."
Más investigación	33	13.7	"Perhaps demand more research from residents."
Improve theoretical contentss	29	12	"More depth in some subjects."
Increased rotations in other institutions	22	9.1	"More experience in the public sphere" "possibility for professional exchange abroad".
More tools for management	22	9.1	"I would like management in health institutions".
Promote social gatherings	8	3.3	"I would like to keep in touch."

possible to analyze the adequacy of the competencies in the training of graduates and the needs of the work and professional environment where they will develop. Our study showed that most graduates considered that the theoretical and practical training received were adequate for their current professional tasks. Likewise, most maintain academic, labor, and or social relationships

with their peers. Two-thirds of the graduates were female. This fact is related to the growing feminization of the health professions, in contrast to the results obtained in the follow-up study of graduates of hospital residencies at HIBA carried out in 2008, in which the proportion of male respondents reached 57%¹³⁻¹⁵. Less than half of the graduates were born in CABA, and more than half

currently live there. We observed that a large majority remained in CABA after completing their training; this may be due to personal or professional projects in the current life stage of the graduates.

Furthermore, most of the training offered in Argentina is in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, and our University is in that region¹⁶. On the other hand, the study by Eymann et al. showed that only 7% of HIBA residency graduates returned to their city of origin¹⁶. The greater participation of graduates from postgraduate careers than degree careers could be because, in our context, the University is closely bound to hospital careers. These university degrees are closely involved with a professional residency at the hospital.

It provides experiential learning situations of supervised care with patients and generates tight bonds and a marked identity of belonging to the institution. Even so, in a previous study on follow-up in HIBA residencies, the response rate was almost 50%¹⁶. Two-thirds of the graduates completed postgraduate training (specializations, master's degrees, or doctorates), and two-thirds completed a residency for health professionals.

The high percentage of graduates who carry out continuing education activities could be due to the professional characteristics of each career, which requires constant updating, the educational motivations proposed by the University, and the growing educational requirements of employers. Almost all of the graduates stated that the training obtained is related to their work and, besides, they have current jobs. The current unemployment rate in the country is 7.7%, and only 27% of those unemployed have completed higher education⁵.

However, it is interesting to note that one-third of those who responded to our study reported that they are currently looking for other jobs. That could be explained by the different and asymmetrical payment modalities in the health professions, depending on the specialties and regions of the country. In a highly competitive labor world, one might suggest that those currently looking for work could find in continuous education a way to obtain a differential that gives them more possibilities. That would explain why those included in this study, even though they are university students, do not represent as directly the people looking for work.

Two-thirds reported that they work in the private sector, coinciding with a previous study in our institution, which showed that 85% of the graduates of the residencies worked in the same sector. Perhaps this trend is due to the characteristics of job offers in the health sector and to the fact that our University is a private-sector institution. Half of the graduates reported teaching activities; one-third were in research activities, while another third were in extension or knowledge transfer activities. There is an extensive tradition in the health professions regarding teaching knowledge, from the teacher-disciple model to the university model¹⁷.

Consistent with the study findings carried out more than ten years ago in the same context, it showed that

60% of the graduates carried out teaching tasks and 32% research¹⁶. We cannot be sure that the above responses can extrapolate to other educational entities in health or that they are related to the exposure of this type of graduates to research and teaching during their graduate and postgraduate training.

On the other hand, almost all of them would recommend a friend to study at our University. These results are related to the same previous study in which 97% of the graduates of the medical residencies at the Italian Hospital would recommend a professional in training to study at our institution¹⁶.

This research has several limitations: its responses came from an online questionnaire, and the response rate was low. In addition, the respondents were probably those most satisfied with their training. On the other hand, when inquiring into the perception of events that occurred many years ago, these are invariably subject to recall bias.

This research is part of a line of investigation that the University should maintain to carry out a cycle of continuous improvement and to adapt the contents to the requirements of the working world. It would be necessary to improve the response rate, especially among graduates not linked to the institution.

Another aspect to improve in the following stages would be the systematic integration of their data to facilitate follow-up and the periodicity of obtaining responses so they can be comparable over time. In turn, the particularities of each career will continue to be studied in depth to include improvements in the programs, for example, the need for more internships or research tools.

Even with the limitations of the present study, we consider that it provides valuable information on the characteristics of graduates and the perceived relationship between their learning and their professional trajectory. As Orosco Condori et al. point out, the data collected from the updating of information on graduates is a tool for providing feedback, improving existing programs, detecting opportunities for planning new professional updating programs, specializing in areas of interest, strengthening the link with the institution as a reference environment, contributing to the formation and strengthening of its graduate community¹⁸.

In Argentina, there are papers focused on a single faculty, such as the School of Dentistry, or theses investigating the national university system, all of which agree on the importance of monitoring to identify the needs that allow programs to be adapted and improved. They also emphasize the importance of permanent liaison with graduates for them to continue choosing the same university for new opportunities for postgraduate training and specialization¹⁸⁻²⁰. The relationship between training and labor market insertion is complex, but the tracking of graduates helps us understand better the training needs of professionals.

CONCLUSION

Most graduates considered that the theoretical and practical training acquired were adequate for their current professional tasks. This study showed a high level of labor insertion in jobs related to their studies at the University. Likewise, they maintain academic, labor, and personal relationships with their classmates, and almost all would recommend their friends to study at our University, the Instituto Universitario Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires. It is essential to get the response of more people, especially those who have not been linked to the University, to learn more about their particular situation.

Conflict of interest: the authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCIAS

- Berdaguer LF. Trayectorias educativas y profesionales de los estudiantes de posgrado de universidades argentinas. *Kairos Rev Temas Sociales*. 2014;18(33):1-14.
- Instituto Universitario del Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires (IUIHIBA) [Internet]. Buenos Aires: Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires; 2023 [citado 2021 ene 14]. Disponible en: <https://instituto.hospitalitaliano.org.ar/#/home/principal/inicio>.
- Rentería Pérez E, Enríquez Martínez A. ¿Usted mismo s.a.? O el posicionamiento profesional en el mercado de trabajo. Reflexiones desde el marketing y el comportamiento del consumidor. *Psicología desde el Caribe*. 2006;(18):139-160.
- Brunner JJ. Peligro y promesa: educación superior en América Latina [Internet]. Santiago, Chile; 2001 [citado 2022 ene 14]. Disponible en: http://200.6.99.248/~bru487cl/files/PELIGRO%20Y%20PROMESA_es%20EN%20AL_2_.pdf.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos. Mercado de trabajo: tasas e indicadores socioeconómicos (EPH) [Internet]. Buenos Aires: INDEC; 2021 [citado 2021 ene 14]. Disponible en: https://www.indec.gob.ar/uploads/informedesdeprensa/mercado_trabajo_eph_4trim211A57838DEC.pdf.
- CHEERS Careers after Graduation- European Research Survey. CHEERS European graduate survey: overview [Internet]. Qtafi; 2015 [citado 2021 ene 14]. Disponible en: <https://www.qtafi.de/cheers-european-graduate-survey.html>.
- Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos. Informe del 4º estudio del Observatorio de Graduados [Internet]. Concepción del Uruguay: UNER; 2017 [citado 2021 ene 14]. Disponible en: <https://graduados.uner.edu.ar/public/uploads/1196543066262.pdf>.
- Zandomeni N, Chignoli S. Estudio de seguimiento de egresados: el caso de los graduados recientes de la FCE-UNL. *Ciencias Económicas*. 2018;1(8):45-58.
- QTAFI Group. International Network of Graduate Surveys (INGRADNET) [Internet]. Kassel: INGRADNET; 2016 [citado 2021 ene 14]. Disponible en: <https://www.ingradnet.org/>.
- King-Domínguez A, Llinas-Audet X, Améstica-Rivas L. Rankings universitarios como medida de calidad: análisis comparado en Latinoamérica. *Revista Venezolana de Gerencia*. 2018;vol esp(1)1:218-37.
- Navarrete PM, Osegueda RM. Percepción de la relación entre educación superior y trabajo en graduados de la Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador. *Entorno*. 201;(62):19-26.
- Quacquarelli Symonds QS [Internet]. London: QS; 2019-2023 [citado 2021 abr 14]. Disponible en: <https://www.qs.com/>.
- Borracci RA, Salazar AI, Arribalzaga EB. El futuro de la feminización de la medicina en Argentina. *FEM*. 2018;21(3):113-118.
- Bickel J. Women in academic medicine. *J Am Med Womens Assoc* (1972). 2000;55(1):10-2, 19.
- Eymann A, Carrió S, Durante E, et al. Seguimiento de graduados de las residencias del Hospital Italiano. *Rev Hosp Ital B.Aires*. 2009;29(1):24-27.
- Observatorio Federal de Recursos Humanos. La formación de grado y posgrado en la Argentina: año 2017 [Internet]. Buenos Aires: Argentina. Ministerio de Salud; 2017 [citado 2021 abr 14]. Disponible en: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/ofertus_la_formacion_de_grado_y_posgrado_en_argentina_ano_2017.pdf.
- Mulholland M, McNaughten B, Bourke T. 'I'm a doctor, not a teacher': the roles and responsibilities of paediatricians in relation to education. *Arch Dis Child Educ Pract Ed*. 2022;107(3):223-226. <https://doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2020-320266>.
- Orosco Condori EA, Speroni F. Seguimiento y vinculación con graduados. *Revista ES*. 2021;1(1y2):e030.
- Jacinto NM. Los mecanismos de seguimiento de graduados como estrategia para la definición de políticas de educación superior: una perspectiva comparada de los casos UNR/UNL [Carrera de Especialización en Política y Gestión de la Educación Superior]. Costa A, editor. Universidad Nacional de Rosario; 2020.
- Medina MM, Mosconi EB, Coscarelli NY, et al. Seguimiento de egresados como herramienta de evaluación y retroalimentación. Trabajo presentado en: V Congreso Internacional Virtual de Educación; 2005 feb 7-27; Islas Baleares, España.