Chapter 7
Study Plans and Programs Supporting Geriatric Dentistry Teaching in Cuba:
An Update

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ABSTRACT

The aging population in the world constitutes one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century across social sectors; dental education is no exception. This review explored the status of geriatric dentistry teaching in Cuba and contrasted it with examples from international curricula and programs. Google Scholar, PubMed, Wiley, and Scielo databases were used to search for articles that address geriatric dentistry topics, focusing on undergraduate curricular issues and the management of postgraduate specialization. The findings highlight the need to update curricula and programs for dentistry studies in Cuba to improve the quality of dental care for the aging population. The evolution of training future Cuban graduates aims to meet the healthcare needs of older adults while preserving their quality of life. Additionally, the incorporation of new information and communication technologies has been observed during this process.

INTRODUCTION

The aging population in the world constitutes one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century across social sectors; dental education is no exception. Chávez–Reátegui et al. (2014) defined geriatric dentistry as dental care provided to individuals over the age of 60 as well as adults of any age whose overall health condition is significantly influenced by degenerative processes, diseases and certain health conditions that are usually associated with older adults.

Many countries, Kossioni et al. (2017), Marchini et al. (2018), Xavier et al. (2020) and Shigli et al. (2020) have added geriatric dentistry to dental education programs. Fernández et al. (2019) indicated that this branch of dentistry arose in the United States in the 1960s, promoted by dentists focused on oral health care from a geriatric approach.

In most countries, however, geriatric dentistry is recognized as a form of postgraduate education, master's degree or a diploma, but not as a specialty. According to Tahani et al. (2019) and Jiang et al. (2021), Brazil was the first country to recognize geriatric dentistry as a dental specialty in 2001. Martínez-Asanza et al. (2020a) pointed out that in Cuba geriatric dentistry is not considered a dental specialty but rather a master's degree. The area is included within the dental education plan as a subtheme in the fourth-year program of the *Comprehensive Family Care* subject (Dirección Nacional de Estomatología, 2020).

According to the Cuba Health Statistic Yearbook in its 2023 edition, at the end of 2022, 22.3% of the Cuban population was 60 years older (Cuba, Ministerio de

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