

HEALTH CONDITIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS OF THE JACOBINA-BAHIA¹

CONDIÇÕES DE SAÚDE DOS PROFESSORES DE EDUCAÇÃO ESPECIAL DE JACOBINA – BAHIA

CONDICIONES DE SALUD DE LOS PROFESORES DE EDUCACIÓN ESPECIAL DE JACOBINA – BAHIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to describe the health conditions of Special Education teachers who work with AEE in the municipality of Jacobina / BA. A questionnaire was applied to 14 teachers. The answers of the questionnaire were tabulated, statistically categorized and the data comprehension procedure based on the Critical Theory. It was possible to observe that, in general, most of the teachers affirmed to practice physical exercises, mainly the walk or run in the open air; however much said he felt pain in the spine or joints and very few have asked to leave work in recent years. In addition, most consider their nutrition very healthy.

Keywords: Teaching work; Special education; Teaching health

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo foi descrever as condições de saúde dos professores de Educação Especial que atuam com AEE no município de Jacobina/BA. Foi aplicado um questionário a 14 professores. As respostas do questionário foram tabuladas, categorizadas de forma estatística e o procedimento de compreensão dos dados foi baseado na Teoria Crítica. Foi possível observar que, de forma geral a maioria dos professores afirmaram praticar exercícios físicos, principalmente a caminhada ou corrida ao ar livre; entretanto grande parte afirmou sentir dores na coluna ou nas articulações e muito poucos pediram afastamento do trabalho nos últimos anos. Além disso a maioria considera sua alimentação muito saudável.

Palavras Chave: Trabalho docente; Educação Especial; Saúde docente

¹ This article is an integral part of a PhD research developed in the Graduate Program in Education of the Federal University of Bahia (PPGE/UFBA) and presents the findings regarding the health education of Special Education teachers who work with Specialized Educational Assistance in the municipality of Jacobina/Bahia.

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Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo fue describir las condiciones de salud de los profesores de Educación Especial que actúan con AEE en el municipio de Jacobina / BA. Se aplicó un cuestionario a 14 profesores. Las respuestas del cuestionario fueron tabuladas, categorizadas de forma estadística y el procedimiento de comprensión de los datos fue basado en la Teoría Crítica. Es posible observar que, de forma general la mayoría de los profesores afirmaron practicar ejercicios físicos, principalmente la caminata o corrida al aire libre; sin embargo gran parte afirmó sentir dolores en la columna o en las articulaciones y muy pocos pidieron alejamiento del trabajo en los últimos años. Además la mayoría considera su alimentación muy sana.

Palabras clave: Trabajo docente; Educación Especial; Salud docente

Introduction

Concern about worker health comes from Ancient Greece. According to Pereira (2010), research records of Hippocrates, known as the "father of medicine", were found on diseases that affected workers in the lead mines, due to their contact with this chemical element.

However, it was only in the mid-1950s that studies of workload and occupational diseases were taken into account in global policies, and from then on they gained increasing importance.

The importance is given by the fact that human labor is directly linked, in the first place, to its own sustenance, because "the state in which the worker presents himself in the market as a seller of his own labor force has left to the bottom of the primitive times the state in which human labor has not yet been dislodged from its first instinctive form." (MARX, 1996, p.298). Thus, the way that working conditions affect the health of the human being means a better living condition for the worker.

In this text, the focus is on teaching work conditions, especially the health element. According to Tamez (2010), several studies on teacher health have created the term "teacher malaise", which refers to health problems due to the specificity of the teacher's work. The same author also emphasizes that this concept cannot be analyzed dissociated from the political, social and economic context in which the teacher acts.

According to Oliveira and Vieira (2012), the neoliberal policies implemented by various countries from the 1980s onwards and specifically in Brazil in the mid-1990s have directly affected the work of the teacher, leading to the precariousness and loss

of historically conquered rights. According to the same authors, the main impacts generated by these policies were:

(...) a) quantitative extension of the teaching profession; b) increasing heterogeneity of teaching work; c) increasing degrees of inequality among teachers; d) deterioration of material and symbolic rewards; e) increasing consequences on the subjective plane (OLIVEIRA, VIEIRA, 2012, page 20).

Oliveira and Maúes (2012) also point out that the profession has become one of the main targets of neoliberal policies, inserted within a series of "guidelines, programs and actions oriented towards regulation and professional control through benchmarking and performance pay , as well as the definition of professional competencies and certifications "(OLIVEIRA; MAÚES, 2012, page 67).

Thus, with lower salaries, less bonuses, more demands, higher hours, more students, it is notorious that teachers' health is directly affected. Because of this, clashes between governments and unions in the category have become increasingly constant, for the support of the labor rights acquired over the years.

Thus, although several studies on teacher health conditions have already been produced in the last ten years (FOLLE & FARIAS, 2012, HÄFELE & SILVA, 2014, SILVA & GUILLO, 2015, EUGENIO et al., 2017, MOTA JÚNIOR et al, The question of teacher health of Special Education teachers, especially those who work with the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) of students with disabilities, has not yet been explored.

Thus, this article aimed to describe the health conditions of Special Education teachers who work with Specialized Educational Assistance in the city of Jacobina / BA.

Methodology

This text can be characterized as a field study, exploratory type, allowing to develop, elucidate and can also serve to raise hypotheses or formulate problems for future research (GIL, 2010).

A self-administered questionnaire was produced with closed questions, using other studies on working conditions as a reference (SILVA, 2013; NASCIMENTO, SANTOS, 2015; CARVALHO, 2016; ARAÚJO, 2017; SANTOS, 2017). The questions of the questionnaire selected for this article are aimed at learning about teacher health (specifically focusing on the elements of physical activity, symptoms of illness, withdrawal from work and nutrition), according to Borges et al. (2015) considered one of the elements that make up the conditions of the teacher.

The responses of the questionnaire were tabulated, categorized in a statistical manner and the procedure of understanding the data based on the Critical Theory, whose guiding principles are non-neutrality, the historicity of knowledge, establishing links and parallels between data and material conditions underlying (VILELA, NAPOLES, 2010).

The research was developed in the municipality of Jacobina, the largest in the region known as Piemonte da Diamantina, in the northern center of the state of Bahia. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Jacobina presents a population estimate of 83,635 inhabitants (IBGE, 2017).

The criterion for selecting the subjects participating in the study was that the teachers had worked for at least a year with Specialized Educational Attendance of students with disabilities in the municipal public service of Jacobina.

Participants were offered a free and informed consent form (TCLE), which guarantees the confidentiality of their identities, among other elements that legitimize the voluntary participation of the subjects. In addition, the project was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the State University of Bahia (CEP / UNEB) under the CAAE protocol number: 79862917.6.0000.0057, which was later approved through opinion nº 2532.689.

Results and discussion of data

According to the Municipal Department of Education, the municipality of Jacobina had a total of 17 Special Education teachers who have worked in the ESA for at least one year. Of this total, 14 professors accepted to participate in the research, making a total of 82.35% of the universe found. All 14 teachers participating in the study are female, with ages between 35 and 57 years of age, as observed in table 1.

Table 1 - General data of participating teachers

Participants	Sex	Age
Subject 01	Female	47
Subject 02	Female	46
Subject 03	Female	50
Subject 04	Female	36
Subject 05	Female	46
Subject 06	Female	48
Subject 07	Female	44
Subject 08	Female	35
Subject 09	Female	49
Subject 10	Female	39
Subject 11	Female	39
Subject 12	Female	48
Subject 13	Female	57
Subject 14	Female	47

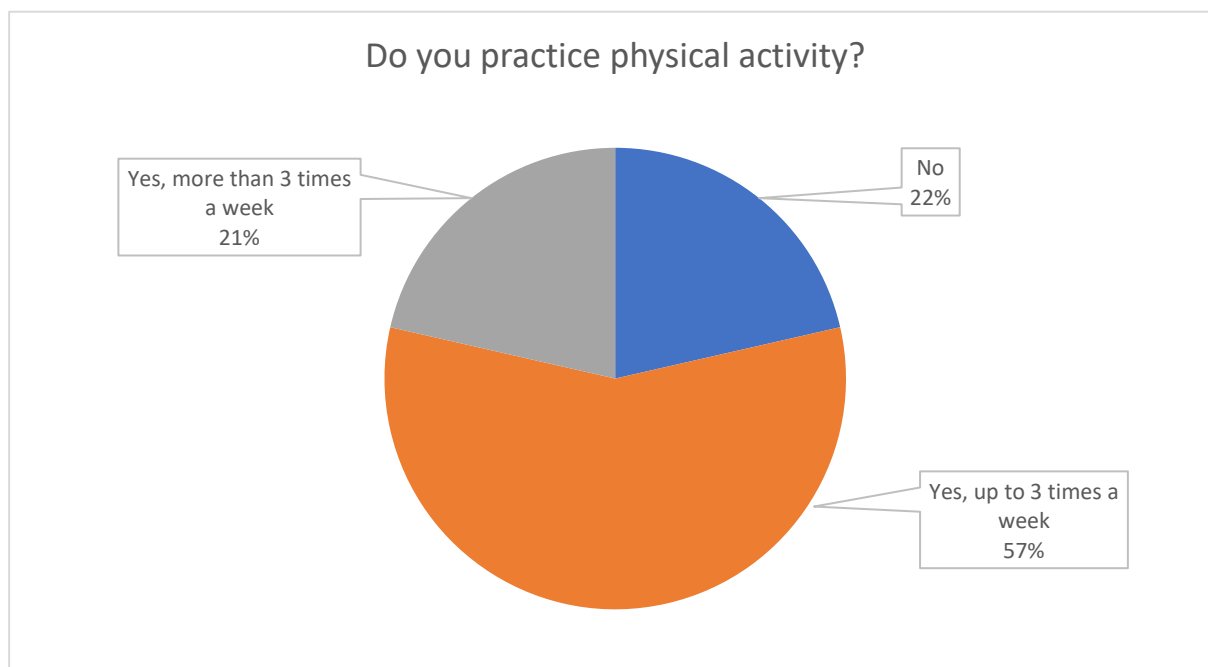
(Source: Own elaboration, 2019).

According to Areia and Guimarães (2004), in their study, they realized that female teachers were more likely to become ill than male teachers. This is because, in addition to the school work day, traditionally most women in Brazil still have another working day, dealing with household chores and family care. This causes physical and mental exhaustion and consequently more serious health problems. Pimentel et al (2018) corroborate this idea and also complement the relationship between gender differences and neoliberal policies:

Economic and gender inequality are closely interrelated. (...) It is not by chance that women are widely over-represented in many of the worst-paid and least secure jobs. Around the world, social norms, attitudes, and beliefs devalue women's status and skills, justify violence and discrimination against them, and determine the jobs to which they may or may not apply (PIMENTEL et al, 2018, pp. 10-11).

Entering the questionnaire, the first question was related to teacher health and sought to elucidate the amount of Special Education teachers from the municipality of Jacobina / BA, who practice physical activity. The data collected are shown in the graph of figure 1.

Figure 1 - Percentage of teachers who exercise regularly



(Source: Own elaboration, 2019)

The data show that 22% of the teachers surveyed made it clear that they do not practice any type of physical activity. Already 57% said they regularly practice some type of physical activity, in this case up to 3 times a week. Already for 21% of the subjects participating in the research, physical activity is performed at a frequency above 3 times per week. The results show that 78% of teachers practice some kind of regular physical activity.

Due to the fact that no study was found regarding teachers' health or physical activity of Special Education teachers, the data of this article were analyzed in contrast to other studies referring to teacher health and physical activity of the teachers of the regular classes of Basic Education.

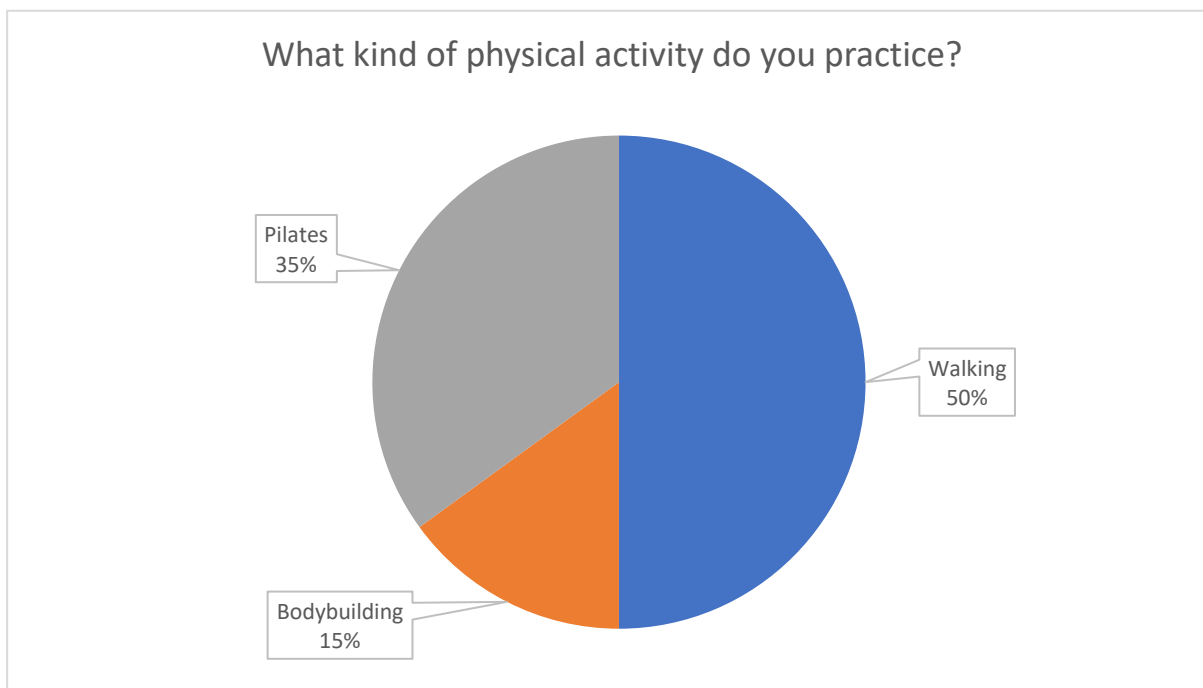
Contrary to the findings of this article, Folle and Farias (2012), in their study, analyzed the quality of life and physical activity of 71 teachers who work in three state schools in the city of Palhoça, Santa Catarina state. The results showed that teachers' quality of life can be considered reasonable. In addition, it was observed that most teachers do not practice regular physical activity, having only a very small percentage of teachers who practice. The study makes it clear that most subjects are sedentary.

The article by Häfele e Silva (2014) aimed to verify the level of physical activity of 73 teachers working in schools in the municipality of Morro Redondo, state of Rio Grande do Sul. The results indicated that the total mean of physical activity reported by teachers was 1701.7 minutes per week. It was also observed that 61.6% of the teachers presented insufficient physical activity level and only 11% of the teachers were considered sufficiently active, both regarding leisure. Regarding the work and activity related to the domestic environment, 19.2% and 69.9%, respectively, were considered sufficiently active. The authors concluded that the average number of teachers participating in the study had low levels of physical activity.

Mota Júnior et al (2017) produced a research that aimed to evaluate the level of physical activity of 200 teachers of both sexes of the public network of Viçosa, state of Minas Gerais. The authors used two different instruments, the International Questionnaire of Physical Activity, known as IPAQ and the evaluation of steps through the pedometer. The results show that in the IPAQ evaluation 70% of teachers reached adequate levels of physical activity, whereas, by the pedometer only 26.5%. The authors concluded that there was no agreement between the two research instruments, since by IPAQ most of the teachers were considered physically active, but by the pedometer the majority was considered inactive.

Going back to the data of our research, of the 78% of teachers practicing physical activity, the graph of figure 2 shows the distribution of the different types of activities that they most exercise.

Figure 2 - Distribution of types of physical exercise practiced by teachers



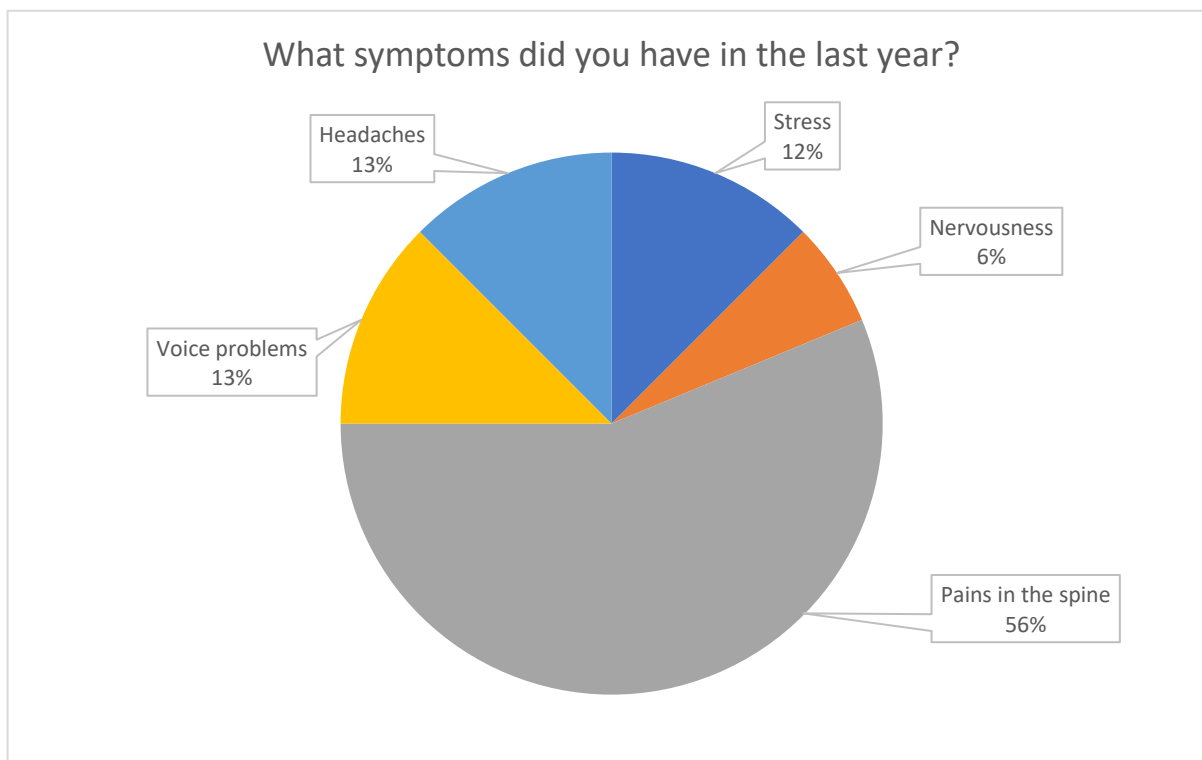
(Source: Own elaboration, 2019)

Half of the teachers (50%) said they practice walking or running outdoors. Already 35% of the teachers attended a Pilates studio and 15% said they practiced Bodybuilding in a gym.

It was possible to perceive that most of the teachers who work with ESA in the municipality of Jacobina / BA consider physical activity as an important element of their lives. This is an important fact, since it makes clear that the teachers participating in the study are aware of the problems that the sedentary life entails, mainly as an important risk factor for the appearance of several chronic degenerative diseases (FALEIRO et al, 2017).

Subsequently teachers were asked if they felt or felt any of the symptoms presented in the questionnaire, resulting from their work as ESA teacher. The findings are presented in the graph of figure 3.

Figure 3 - Distribution of symptoms felt by teachers on account of work



(Source: Own elaboration, 2019)

In the first place, the pains in the spine or in the joints appeared, cited by 56% of the teachers. 13% said they already had headaches. Also 13% said they had voice problems. 12% had symptoms of stress and 6% reported having bouts of nervousness.

These data can be analyzed in parallel with other studies related to teacher health in basic education, such as the study by Silva and Guillo (2015), with 20 teachers from state schools in a city in the Southwest of Goiás, and showed that 70% of teachers indicated stress as the most cited condition. Then voice-related problems appear at 55%. Diseases related to musculoskeletal pain, such as back and limb pain, were cited by 30%. Other mental health-related illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, nervousness and panic attacks were cited by 25% of teachers.

In the state of Bahia, we have the study of Eugênio et al (2017), which dealt with the health and sickness of the teachers of a municipality in the interior. The research had the application of a questionnaire to 53 teachers, of which 5 teachers also participated in an interview. The results indicated that the health of the teachers studied was compromised, many developing varied symptoms, such as: voice problems, tendon and joint

pain, stress, distress, discouragement, apathy and impatience. The authors make clear that these symptoms are due to a series of social problems arising from neoliberal reforms.

The initial research, which outlines this phenomenon, has pointed out that the health of the teaching worker is increasingly weakened due to life situations associated with different health reasons, the physical exhaustion of standing for several hours teaching, using excessive speech, even emotional problems resulting from innumerable daily dissatisfaction in the effective exercise of the profession, the process of devaluation of the teaching category, lack of quality work infrastructure, low remuneration gain and family problems, among others (EUGENE et al., 2017, p.180).

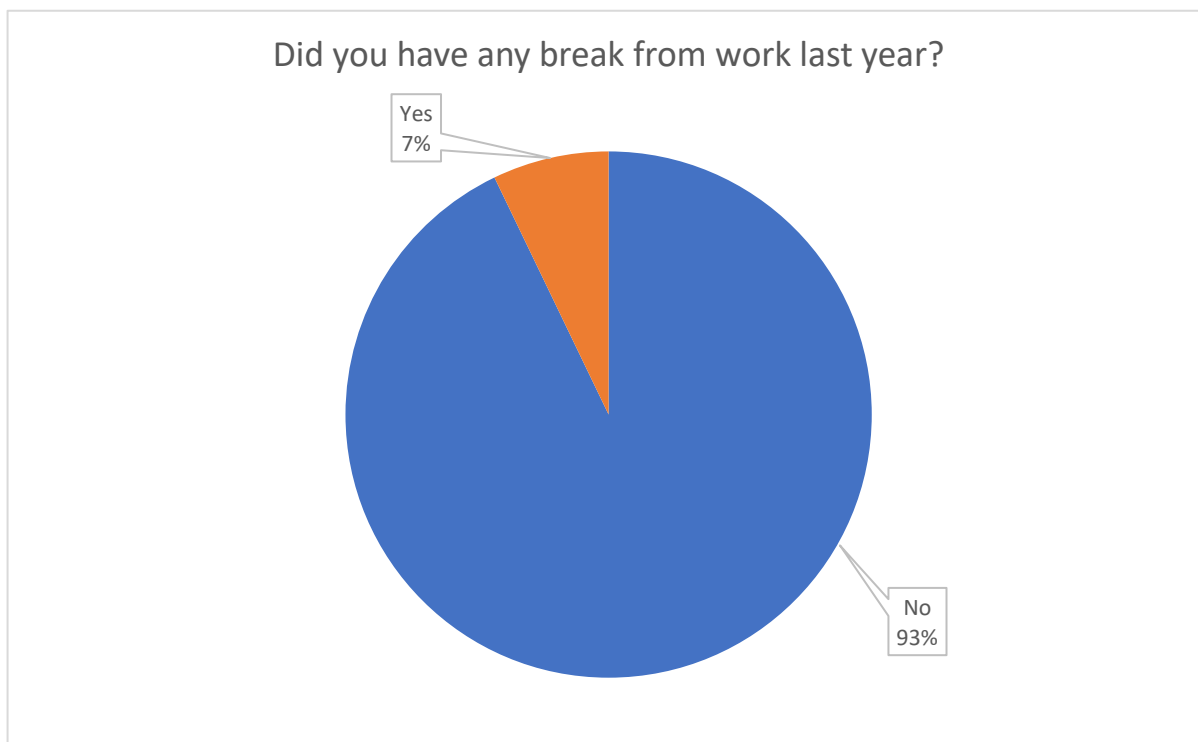
Tostes et al (2018) did a study on mental suffering with one thousand twenty-one (1021) teachers of public education in the state of Paraná. The results showed that 75% of teachers had minor psychic disorders, 70% had anxiety and 44% had depression. It is clear that some teachers show that they have more than one symptom.

The results also indicated that there is a relevant association of these symptoms with other elements, such as: the fact that the teacher has another illness, teachers who take work home, teachers with more career time, those who work with elementary education and teachers female.

The authors found that the teachers of the state education network of Paraná presented levels of mental suffering far higher than those presented in other professional groups.

Teachers were also asked if they had been discharged from work due to health problems in the last year (referring to the year 2017). The data were presented in the graph of figure 4:

Figure 4 - Removal of work teachers



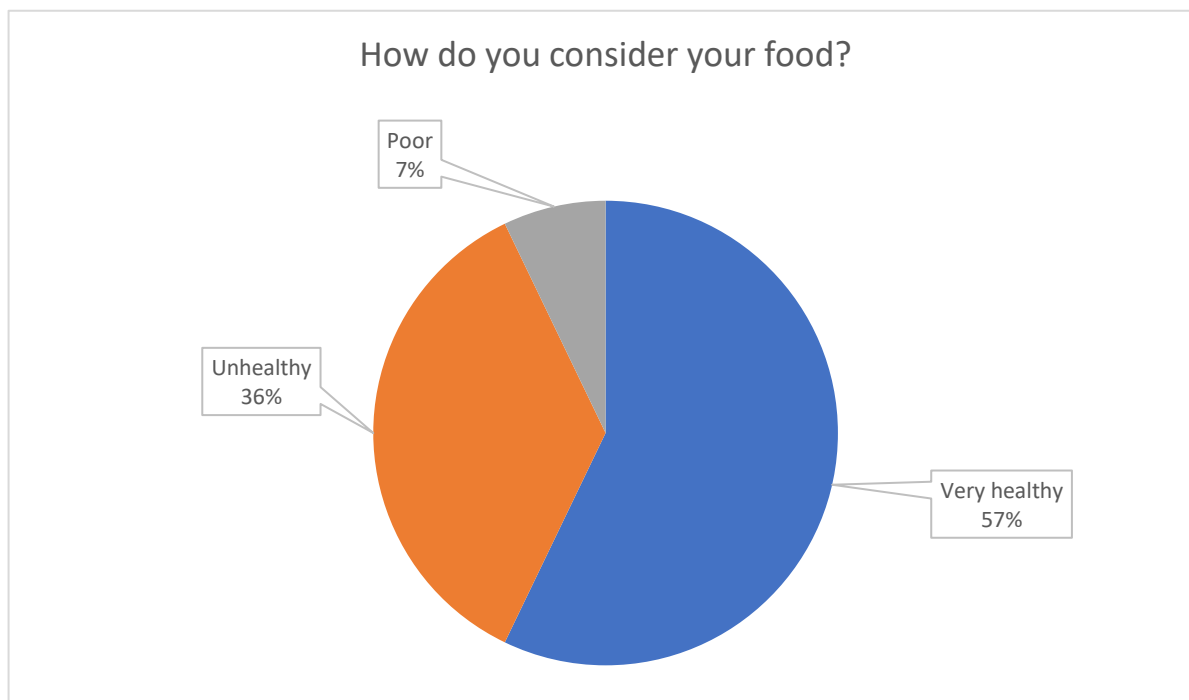
(Source: Own elaboration, 2019)

Figure 4 shows that 93% of teachers said they did not leave work because of health problems. Only 7% said they had walked away.

These findings are in agreement with the research by Freitas and Castro (2018) that investigated proximity between the main causes of teacher malaise that occur in teachers in Brazil and the municipal education network in Uberaba, state of Minas Gerais. The study also analyzed the influence of stress on the teacher's work and its relationship with health leave, in 2014, of the crowded servers in the Municipal Secretariat of Education of Uberaba-MG. The results indicated that there were many requests for the removal of work, due to health problems, from Uberaba teachers, with mental health problems and musculoskeletal disorders accounting for almost 50% of teacher withdrawals and also for more than half of the number of days of remoteness.

The last question concerning the elements of teacher health asked the ESA teachers in the municipality of Jacobina to evaluate their own diet, according to their own criteria. The result is compiled in the graph of figure 5.

Figure 5 - Teachers' evaluation of their own feeding



(Source: Own elaboration, 2019)

57% of teachers consider their food as very healthy. 36% consider eating unhealthy and only 7% consider their own food poor.

There were no studies related to the feeding of Special Education teachers who work in regular schools. Even studies related to the feeding of regular classroom teachers of basic education were also scarce. In this case, the findings of this article were related to only two researches, one on nutritional profile and the other referring to higher education teachers. In this case it is not possible to do more than just approximations to support the analysis.

The research of Perin et al (2014) aimed to evaluate the nutritional profile, consumption and knowledge about Functional Foods of 31 teachers from state schools of a municipality in the Northeast of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The results showed that nutritional status of 61.29% of the teachers had a high risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, being related to body mass index, overweight and waist circumference.

Almeida et al. (2016) study aimed to evaluate the food consumption of 21 teachers working in the nutrition course of a higher education institution in the interior of the state of São Paulo, in relation to the quality of life. The results of the study made clear

that the teachers consume little milk and its derivatives, besides little consumption of vegetables, vegetables, whole grains, fruits. On the other hand, high consumption of red meat and industrialized foods was observed.

As part of a more comprehensive study on teaching work, this article has as main limitations the fact that it does not use data collection instruments to evaluate population health and does not have similar studies produced in other realities, to enable a more accurate analysis.

Final considerations

Here we return to the purpose of this article, which is to describe the health conditions of Special Education teachers who work with Specialized Educational Assistance in the city of Jacobina / BA, where it was possible to synthesize the findings of the research, through the data emanating from the proposed category, the teacher health, which were focused on issues related to elements of physical activity, symptoms of illness, withdrawal from work and nutrition.

Most of the teachers affirmed to practice some type of physical activity, being the walk or run in the open air the most cited by the subjects. However, most said they felt some debilitating health symptoms due to teaching work, and the pains in the spine or joints were the most cited.

Despite this, a small part of the interview subjects reported that they have been away from work in recent years. Regarding teacher feeding, most consider their food to be very healthy. With this result we can infer that the health conditions of the teachers studied do not favor significantly to their well-being, which negatively influences the working conditions of teachers.

Therefore, it is important that other researches be done in this specific population, using other research tools, in order to collect more detailed data about the teaching health and thus, to contribute more and more to the theme.

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