

EVALUATION OF THE REPRESENTATION BY GENDER AND RACE OF THE LECTURERS IN THE MEETINGS OF THE BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF DENTAL RESEARCH: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS OF THE LAST 4 YEARS



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ABSTRACT

The meetings of the Brazilian Society of Dental Research (SBPqO) is the main scientific research event in Brazil, with the function of scientific dissemination, corroborating the development and recognition of scientific projects. Observing the composition of the

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speakers is an important parameter to understand how this society dialogues with diversity. Thus, the objective is to analyze the representativeness of gender and race among the speakers of the events organized by SBPqO in the last four years, identifying patterns and proposing reflections on gender and race equity. This study uses a quantitative approach as a methodology, with documentary and descriptive analysis of the period from 2020 to 2023. The inclusion criteria considered speakers, whose information on gender and race was taken from the annals available on the event's official website and by the Lattes Platform of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). The data were tabulated, analyzed, and described using graphs. As a result, the comparison of the four years analyzed was obtained, which point to the predominance of 65% of male speakers in relation to the female average, which was 35%. In addition, it was observed that 97% of ministers are white compared to other ethnicities. It is concluded that over four years, a disparity in gender and ethnic-racial representation was identified among the speakers, with a predominance of white men. It is concluded that there is a predominance of male and white speakers at the events of the Brazilian Society of Dental Research (SBPqO) between 2020 and 2023, revealing a low representation of blacks and women, respectively.

Keywords: Gender Diversity. Health Equity. Scientific and Outreach Events. Racial Groups. Research in Dentistry.

INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian Society of Dental Research (SBPqO) is recognized as the main association of scientists in the field of dentistry in Brazil. Every year, SBPqO organizes scientific meetings that bring together researchers from different specialties to promote the exchange of knowledge, the dissemination of technical advances and innovations in the dental sector. These events play a key role in strengthening dental science, encouraging the exchange of experiences and boosting the development of new talent, especially among young researchers (IDOWU, 2023; NOBREGA *et al.*, 2020).

Although SBPqO meetings are widely recognized as spaces for debate and scientific progress, the representativeness of gender and race among speakers and participants is still a topic little explored in the scientific literature. Considering the importance of these events as a stage for professional visibility and academic legitimization, the absence of studies on diversity in this context raises questions about possible structural inequalities that can shape these opportunities for participation (IDOWU, 2023; MESQUITA *et al.*, 2022; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023; SCHUT, 2025).

The analysis of diversity is essential to understand how ethnic-racial and gender dynamics impact social relations and the perpetuation of inequalities in the field of health (SCHUT, 2025). These dynamics are not limited to the labor market; they also influence the inclusion of marginalized groups in spaces of scientific production and in prominent events, such as those organized by SBPqO. Historical-cultural power relations tend to reproduce asymmetries, making it difficult for women and black people to fully represent themselves in scientific spaces. Thus, these scenarios clearly reveal structural challenges that prevent equity in academic and scientific environments (FLEMING; NEVILLE; MUIRHEAD, 2022; GANDRA *et al.*, 2022).

A relevant aspect to be considered is the identification of barriers that limit the representativeness of gender and race in renowned scientific events. This absence not only highlights a gap in terms of equity and plurality of ideas, but also restricts the transformative potential that dental science can achieve. Understanding and overcoming these obstacles is important to promote a more inclusive and diverse environment, capable of reflecting the demands of society and driving significant advances in the area. (FLEMING; NEVILLE; MUIRHEAD, 2022).

Thus, investigating the representativeness of gender and race among speakers at SBPqO events is a relevant initiative to better understand how this scientific association

reflects and interacts with Brazilian diversity. The analysis of these aspects allows the identification of patterns of inclusion or exclusion, in addition to fostering debates on the need to promote greater equity in academic and scientific spaces (GANDRA *et al.*, 2021; IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023).

By promoting this analysis, the study will contribute to the broadening of the understanding of the inequalities present within the scientific dental field, in order to provide subsidies for the implementation of actions that foster greater inclusion and development of a more diverse scientific society with new perspectives and approaches (DOUGLAS *et al.*, 2022; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023).

In this context, the present study aims to analyze the representativeness of gender and race among the speakers of the events promoted by SBPqO in the last four years. Thus, we sought to evaluate how these dimensions of diversity have been incorporated into the composition of lecturers, identifying gaps and proposing reflections on more inclusive and equitable practices in the dental scientific context, thus ensuring the construction of a fairer and more innovative environment with the proposal of a more diverse composition of lecturers at SBPqO events (IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach, with documentary and descriptive analysis, to examine gender and race representativeness among speakers at the annual meetings of the Brazilian Society for Dental Research (SBPqO) held between 2020 and 2023. Data collection was based on public sources, such as official programs, social networks. The analysis was conducted by means of categorization followed by descriptive statistics.

SAMPLE

The sample included speakers at SBPqO's annual events in the analyzed period, categorized by gender (male, female, non-binary, or other) and race/color according to IBGE (BRASIL, 2023). They were the speakers with information obtained from public sources, such as official programs, Lattes Curriculum and professional social networks. Those without available data were excluded.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The collection process took place in two stages. First, official programs and annals of the events available on the SBPqO website or provided by the organization were reviewed to extract the name, institution, regionality, and theme of the lecture.

In the second stage, gender and race/color were inferred from public information, such as names, photos, and descriptions in the Lattes Curriculum profiles and social networks. The race classification followed the IBGE criteria (BRASIL, 2023). In cases of doubt or lack of clear data, a hetero-identification verification protocol was applied.

HETEROIDENTIFICATION

Hetero-identification was performed to validate the participants' race/color information, ensuring greater accuracy and avoiding bias, based on criteria recognized by universities and public agencies, considering phenotypic characteristics recommended by hetero-identification boards in affirmative actions.

Two black dental surgeons in the area of public health conducted the document analysis, applying technical-scientific and ethical criteria. They reviewed public photos and professional profiles, following IBGE guidelines and preserving the privacy of the speakers (BRASIL, 2023).

DATA ANALYSIS

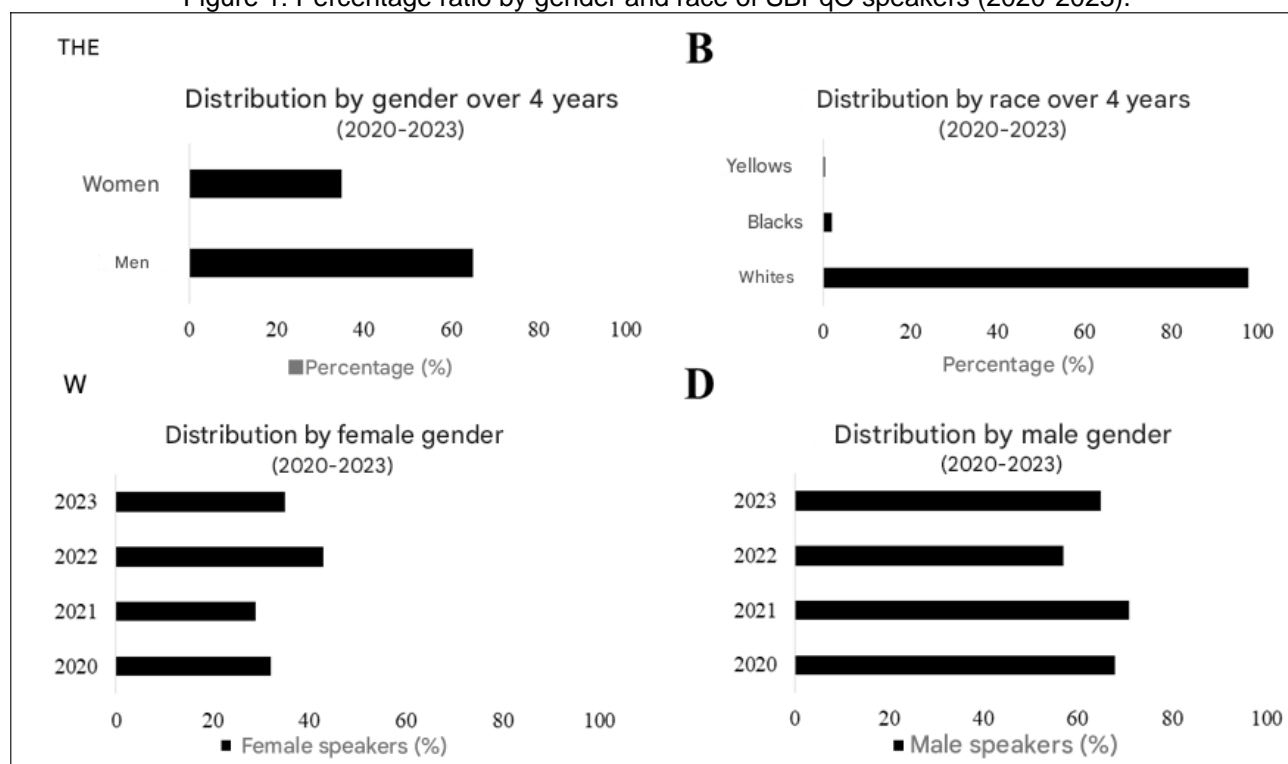
Data analysis was performed in three stages. First, a descriptive analysis categorized speakers by gender, race, and regionality between 2020 and 2023. Then, an annual comparative analysis evaluated variations in diversity, considering thematic representativeness and identifying possible imbalances. Finally, an analysis of temporal trends examined progress or stagnation in the inclusion of underrepresented groups, elucidating ethnic, racial, and regional patterns in SBPqO events, and contributing to reflections on equity and diversity in science.

RESULTS

In the distribution by gender, the analysis revealed a male predominance among the SBPqO speakers in the period analyzed. On average, 65% of the speakers were men, while 35% were women (figure 1). The greatest imbalance was recorded in 2021, when 71% of ministering ministers were men and only 29% were women. In 2022, the highest

gender balance was observed in the period, with 57% of male speakers and 43% of women. However, in 2023 male participation grew again, reaching 65% (Table 1).

Figure 1: Percentage ratio by gender and race of SBPqO speakers (2020-2023).



Source: The author (2024).

Table 1: Annual Distribution of Speakers by Gender and Race (2020–2023).

Variables per year	N (%)	Total
Race of the male speakers of 2020		
White	39 (95.12)	
Black	1 (2.44)	
Yellow	1 (2.44)	
Race of the 2020 female speakers		
White	18 (94.74)	
Black	1 (5.26)	
Genre of the Year 2020		
Woman	19 (31.66)	
Man	41 (68.33)	
Speakers		60
Race of the male speakers of 2021		
White	28 (93.33)	
Black	2 (6.67)	
Race of the 2021 female speakers		
White	12 (100.00)	
Gender of the Year 2021		
Woman	12 (28.57)	
Man	30 (71.43)	
Speakers		42
Race of the male speakers of 2022		
White	35 (100.00)	

Race of the 2022 female speakers		
White	26 (100.00)	
Gender of the Year 2022		
Woman	26 (42.62)	
Man	35 (57.37)	
Speakers		61
Race of the 2023 male speakers		
White	55 (98.21)	
Black	1 (1.79)	
Race of the 2023 female speakers		
White	31 (100.00)	
Gender of the Year 2023		
Woman	31 (35.22)	
Man	56 (64.77)	
Speakers		88

Source: The author (2024).

Observing the distribution by race, the data pointed to a significant racial underrepresentation in the SBPqO events. In all the years analyzed, white speakers formed the vast majority. Only 2% of the speakers identified were black and 0.4% were yellow throughout the period (Table 2). Among men, black participation ranged between 2% and 7%, while the only record of yellow speakers occurred in 2020, representing 2% (Table 1). Among the ministers, black representation was even lower, reaching 5% in 2020 alone. In subsequent years, black ministers practically disappeared from the event, and there was no record of yellow ministers (Table 1).

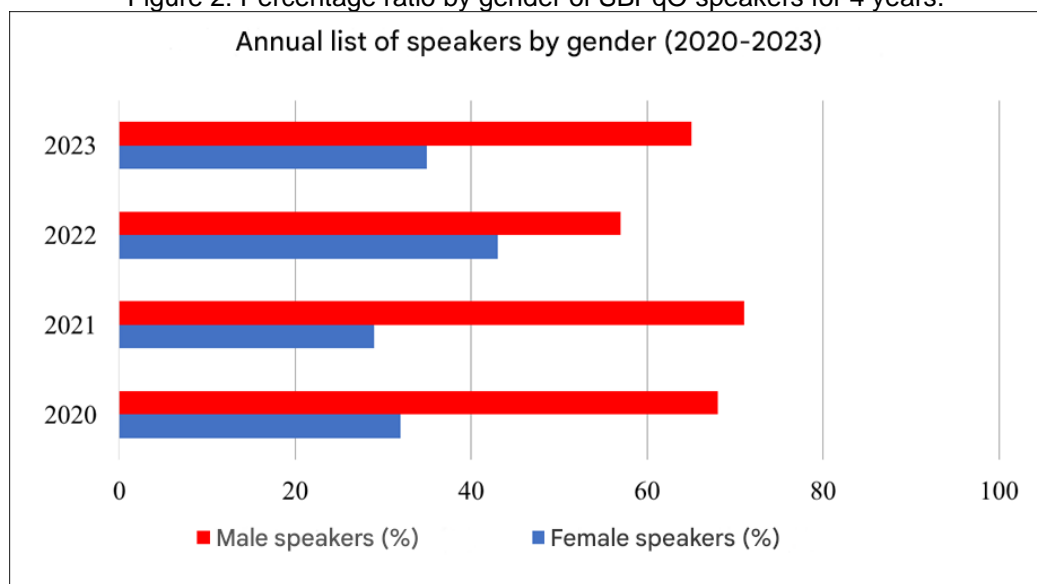
Table 2: Distribution of Speakers by Gender and Race for 4 years (2020–2023).

Variables over 4 years	n (%)	Total
Gender of speakers		
Woman	88 (35.06)	
Man	163 (64.94)	
SBPqO Speakers		251
Race of the speakers		
White	244 (97.21)	
Black	5 (1.67)	
Yellow	1 (0.33)	
SBPqO Speakers		251
Women by race		
White	87 (98.86)	
Black	1 (1.14)	
SBPqO Speakers		88
Men by race		
White	157 (96.91)	
Black	4 (2.47)	
Yellow	1 (0.62)	
SBPqO Speakers		162

Source: The author (2024).

When evaluating annual trends, in 2021, the second largest gender imbalance was observed, with 68% of male speakers and 32% women, in addition to the highest participation of black female ministers (5%). In 2021, there was a considerable increase in this disparity, with 71% of men and 29% of women (figure 2). In 2022, gender balance was the closest, with 57% men and 43% women, although racial diversity remained limited, with no significant advances. In 2023, despite the increase in the total number of speakers, male participation grew again to 65%, while racial diversity decreased, with no record of yellow ministers or those of ethnicities other than whites and blacks (table 1).

Figure 2: Percentage ratio by gender of SBPqO speakers for 4 years.



Source: The author (2024).

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the distribution by gender and race among the SBPqO speakers reveals persistent and accentuated inequalities over the years (FLEMING; NEVILLE; MUIRHEAD, 2022). The predominance of men and whites in SBPqO events is a reflection of the historical inequalities present in the training and performance of dental professionals in Brazil, especially in the context of scientific production. While there was a small advance in gender balance in 2022, with 43% ministering, there is still a long way to go to achieve more equitable representation (FLEMING; NEVILLE; MUIRHEAD, 2022). The growing presence of women in events, although positive, does not reflect true parity, as there is still great inequality, especially with regard to the presence of black women (IDOWU, 2023).

With regard to racial representation, the data point to a significant underrepresentation of ethnic-racial groups outside the white category (IDOWU, 2023; SALSBERG *et al.*, 2021). The presence of black speakers, which ranged from 2% to 7% between the years 2020 and 2023, is a clear indication that dentistry, as well as other areas of health, faces a critical challenge in relation to the inclusion of black professionals in academia and scientific spaces (IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023). Although the SBPqO event is a prominent space in the scientific dissemination of dentistry, it is still evident that the majority speakers belong to a racial category, which limits the diversity of perspectives and experiences in scientific discussions (BABLA *et al.*, 2021; IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023).

Quota policies in Brazil, implemented since 2012 (BRASIL, 2012), have had a significant impact on the inclusion of historically marginalized groups in higher education and research (WEDEKIND *et al.*, 2021). Although the advances are remarkable, especially with the increase in the number of young black researchers and doctors, representativeness in scientific events, such as those promoted by SBPqO, still has considerable gaps. The absence of black speakers in the analyzed editions may reflect both persistent structural inequality and the lack of visibility opportunities and networks for these researchers (IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023). In addition, in the international context, the inclusion of foreign researchers from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa can represent a valuable strategy. Considering that these calls focus on regions outside the traditional axis of the European and North American Global North, the global scenario offers unique opportunities to expand diversity and promote a more inclusive exchange of knowledge. However, it is essential that diversity initiatives in Brazil are strengthened, ensuring that racial representation is also reflected in national scientific productions.

In addition, the issue of gender and race representation in scientific events, such as those promoted by SBPqO, should not be seen only as a matter of numbers. Gender and race parity is key not only to ensuring diversity, but also to promoting a more inclusive environment where different perspectives can be discussed, developed, and applied (AGGARWAL *et al.*, 2020; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023). In a scientific meeting, where the objective is to advance technical knowledge and promote innovations, the lack of diversity can result in the exclusion of experiences and knowledge that are fundamental to the evolution of the profession (IDOWU, 2023). The diversity of speakers is not only a matter of

social justice, but a strategy for enriching scientific knowledge, as it ensures that different voices and realities are heard, reflecting the complexity of the dental society in which we live (NIELSEN; BLOCH; SCHIEBINGER, 2018).

The gender disparity in health is evident in dental events, as demonstrated by the fact that only 38% of the speakers at SBPqO in the last four years have been women. This inequality is also observed in medical fields historically dominated by men, such as orthopedics, as well as in academic programs and scientific events in general (HALIM *et al.*, 2023; PECHLIVANIDOU; ANTONOPOULOS; MARGARITI, 2023). Despite the significant increase in the presence of women in admissions to courses and in the labor market in the last two decades, this progress is related to historical events that made it possible for women to enter the labor market. Notable examples include the conquest of women's voting rights in the 1920s and 1930s and the massive entry of women into the professional space during World War II. These historical moments marked the beginning of social transformations that continue to shape the current scenario (FERNANDES *et al.*, 2024), the proportion of women decreases with career progression: in medicine, only 19% of clinical professors and 37% of senior lecturers are women, with annual growth of 1% to 2% (HOUSE *et al.*, 2021). Female underrepresentation in clinical and academic leadership positions (LIMA, 2017; LYDON *et al.*, 2021; PECHLIVANIDOU; ANTONOPOULOS; MARGARITI, 2023), results in lower pay, publications, funding, and early opportunities, compromising future academic impact.

Several modifiable institutional and cultural factors contribute to gender disparities in dental academia and business. Women's implicit bias and social exclusion reduce their visibility and representation in the media, as well as access to opportunities, resources, and time to conduct high-quality research. This is reflected in the few opportunities they receive to speak at prestigious university events, write invited editorials, or participate in activities that increase their visibility and the subsequent citation of their work, as observed in national scientific events promoted by SBPqO (HA *et al.*, 2021; SIGOLO; GAVA; UNBEHAUM, 2021).

Domestic responsibilities have a significant impact on women's career choices and academic success. Studies show that women with children receive less institutional support and publish less than men in the same condition. They are disproportionately burdened with financial issues, labor market demands, household chores, and family care,

which limits their exclusive dedication to the scientific field (GISSELBAEK *et al.*, 2024; LIMA, 2017; SIGOLO; GAVA; UNBEHAUM, 2021; WARD; LEVIN; GREENFIELD, 2021).

A recent example of a reaction to the lack of diversity in scientific events was the "Symposium: Gender, Race, and Regionality Inequities in Dental Research," held in September 2024. Initially, the event announced a program composed exclusively of white speakers, which generated manifestations from researchers about the lack of racial representation. In response, the board created an Inclusion and Sustainability Commission, which as far as is known, did not exist previously, with the aim of promoting greater diversity in future editions (DOUGLAS *et al.*, 2022). The episode highlights the persistent racial and gender inequality in Brazil, which, despite quota policies, still marks the academic and scientific spheres. The historical exclusion of blacks and women in the Brazilian scientific environment requires more robust affirmative actions, aimed not only at inclusion, but at transforming the dynamics of power and representation in teaching and research institutions (CHHABRA *et al.*, 2024; GANDRA *et al.*, 2022; IDOWU, 2023; JUSTEN *et al.*, 2021; SIGOLO; GAVA; UNBEHAUM, 2021; WEDEKIND *et al.*, 2021).

The awareness of the team organizing scientific events and speakers about anti-racist care and racial awareness is essential to recognize and face prejudice, especially considering the history of racial inequality in Brazil. Brazilian society, marked by more than three centuries of slavery, has built a deeply unequal system that continues to impact the representation of blacks and indigenous people in several areas, including science and health. Understanding this sociocultural context allows participants to adopt more sensitive approaches in education and to broadly assess the professional impacts of the dissemination of knowledge promoted by these events. The inclusion of racially conscious education in the academic curriculum and professional development is a crucial measure to redress historical injustices, reduce inequalities, and promote greater equity in health care editions (DOUGLAS *et al.*, 2022).

It is worth mentioning that the dynamics of a scientific meeting is substantially different from that of a commercial lecture, for example. While commercial lectures can be directed to the promotion of products or services, scientific meetings, such as those organized by SBPqO, have as their central objective the dissemination of knowledge, the promotion of intellectual debates and the collective construction of knowledge. In this context, it is imperative that issues such as gender and race parity be prioritized, as they are decisive for the inclusion of voices from historically marginalized groups, promoting a

more representative, plural, and innovative dentistry (IDOWU, 2023; WARD; LEVIN; GREENFIELD, 2021).

The data analyzed reflect a reality still marked by gender and race inequality in scientific events in dentistry in Brazil. The predominance of white and male speakers, especially in the context of SBPqO, highlights the need for concrete actions to promote greater diversity and inclusion (PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023; WARD; LEVIN; GREENFIELD, 2021).

This discussion is still incipient in Brazilian dentistry, and the present study contributes to shed light on this issue, demonstrating the urgency of creating more effective diversity policies in scientific events. It is essential for dentistry to engage in a continuous process of reflection and action to ensure that its academic and scientific spaces represent the plurality of its society, allowing for the strengthening of dental research and practice as a whole (IDOWU, 2023; PRINCE; FRANCIS, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The study showed a significant predominance of male and white speakers at the events of the Brazilian Society of Dental Research (SBPqO) between 2020 and 2023, revealing a low representation of blacks and women, respectively.

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