

What Makes a Pediatrician a Neonatologist

O Que Faz o Pediatra Ser Neonatologista

Keywords: Neonatologists; Portugal

Palavras-chave: Neonatologista; Portugal

Dear Editor,

A definition of Neonatologist was approved by the National Executive Council of the Portuguese Medical Association (Ordem dos Médicos) on August, 5th 2020.¹ This definition was proposed by the Subspecialty of Neonatology of the College of Paediatrics of the Portuguese Medical Association and had the agreement of the Directorate of the Portuguese Society of Neonatology of the Portuguese Society of Paediatrics.

The Portuguese Medical Association created in 2008 the so-called College of the Subspecialty of Neonatology, responding to a proposal of the College of Paediatrics. Admission into the new College was initially by non-structured curricular evaluation, but in 2012 the specific criteria for evaluation of candidates to the Subspecialty of Neonatology were published.²

The Portuguese Medical Association has an official definition of Subspecialty³ but, as each specific subspecialty was left undefined, there was no clarification about what is required for a paediatrician to be recognized as neonatologist.

The lack of a definition of Neonatologist hampered the apprehension of the criteria for admission into the

Subspecialty of Neonatology, in spite of the detailed description of activities and their specific ambit.² This indefiniteness is not unique, as many institutions responsible for representing physicians worldwide do identify who is responsible for the professional certification of neonatologists and which procedures must be followed, but very few present a definition of neonatologist.^{4,5}

With this publication, the Portuguese Medical Association establishes for the first time in Portugal the specificities of the practice of Neonatology by paediatricians. It identifies activities, expertise, responsibilities and professional relations, set in the contemporary technical and ethical framework of interdisciplinarity, teamwork and family-centred care, chronologically locating these activities from prenatal care to the active participation in palliative care and the planning of limitation of care and end-of-life support.

The published definition refers to the Neonatologist as the physician of the “neonate” but avoids setting age-limits. This option is grounded on the perception of the inadequateness and the understatedness of the age-limit of 28 days, both because the threshold of viability has decreased to less than 12 weeks before term gestational age and due to the responsibility of neonatologist to follow up neonates for a limited period of time, in the outpatient clinic.

The publication of this definition is believed to contribute to clarify both professionals and the public; the latitude and the flexibility of its concepts and terms should remain valid over a long period of time.

REFERENCES

- Ordem dos Médicos. Definição de Neonatologista. 2020. [consultado 2021 jan 12]. Disponível em: <https://ordemdosmedicos.pt/definicao-de-neonatologista/>.
- Ordem dos Médicos. Admissão à Subespecialidade de Neonatologia. Lisboa: OM; 2012.
- Aviso n.º 10746/2020. Diário da República, II Série, n.º 140 (2020/07/21). p. 34-47.
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Neonatal medicine - subspecialty. 2020. [consultado 2021 jan 12]. Disponível em: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/neonatal-medicine-sub-specialty>.
- American Academy of Pediatrics. What is a neonatologist? 2002. [consultado 2021 jan 12]. Disponível em: <http://www.neonatology.org/pdf/WhatIsPedNeonatologist.pdf>.

Daniel VIRELLA✉¹, on behalf of Comissão Técnica da Secção da Subespecialidade de Neonatologia do Colégio de Pediatria

Comissão Técnica da Secção da Subespecialidade de Neonatologia do Colégio de Pediatria:

Ana PITA¹, Cristina MATOS², Daniel VIRELLA¹, Elisa PROENÇA³, Fátima NEGRÃO⁴, Gabriela MIMOSO⁴, Henrique SOARES⁵, Patrícia LAPA⁶, Rosalina BARROSO⁷

1. Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Neonatais. Hospital Dona Estefânia. Centro Hospitalar Universitário de Lisboa Central. Lisboa. Portugal.

2. Unidade de Neonatologia. Hospital CUF Descobertas. Lisboa. Portugal.

3. Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Neonatais. Centro Materno Infantil do Norte. Centro Hospitalar Universitário do Porto. Porto. Portugal.

4. Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Neonatais. Maternidade Bissaya Barreto. Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de Coimbra. Coimbra. Portugal.

5. Serviço de Neonatologia. Centro Hospitalar Universitário de São João. Porto. Portugal.

6. Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Neonatais. Maternidade Daniel de Matos. Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de Coimbra. Coimbra. Portugal.

7. Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Neonatais. Hospital Fernando Fonseca. Amadora. Portugal.

Autor correspondente: Daniel Virella. neonatologia@colegiosordemdosmedicos.pt

Recebido: 12 de janeiro de 2021 - **Aceite:** 14 de janeiro de 2021 - **Online issue published:** 01 de março de 2021

Copyright © Ordem dos Médicos 2021

<https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.15709>

