

# JOB MARKET FOR NURSES IN BRAZIL: A STUDY BASED ON JOB VACANCIES AVAILABLE ON LINKEDIN®

## MERCADO DE TRABALHO PARA ENFERMEIROS NO BRASIL: UM ESTUDO BASEADO NAS VAGAS DISPONÍVEIS NO LINKEDIN®

## MERCADO DE TRABAJO PARA ENFERMEROS EN BRASIL: ESTUDIO BASADO EN LAS VACANTES DISPONIBLES EN LINKEDIN®

Bruno de Campos Gobato<sup>1</sup>  
Caroline Cechinel-Peiter<sup>2</sup>  
Francys Kassick<sup>3</sup>  
Gabriela Marcellino de Melo Lanzoni<sup>4</sup>  
Fernando Henrique Antunes Menegon<sup>5</sup>  
Carlos Leonardo Figueiredo Cunha<sup>6</sup>  
José Luís Guedes dos Santos<sup>7</sup>

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**Objective:** to describe the characteristics of the job market for nurses in Brazil, based on vacancies available on LinkedIn®. **Method:** this is an online documentary survey with a quantitative and qualitative approach, carried out in July 2020. The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and textual analysis, respectively. **Results:** a total of 299 job vacancies were identified, mostly in the Southeast (62.3%), in hospitals (68.9%), for care purposes (41.5%) and for junior nurses (91.3%). The mean earnings were R\$4,058.15 (±1,389.82). As a prerequisite, compulsory postgraduate studies stood out (37.8%). In the qualitative analysis, the functions related to direct patient care stood out, but also with a focus on care supervision/coordination. **Conclusion:** the main employment opportunities are in the care sector. Specialized training and managerial skills are valued by hiring institutions.

**Descriptors:** Job Market. Employment. Nurses. Professional Practice. Social Networking.

Corresponding author: José Luís Guedes dos Santos, santosjlg29@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6861-5146>.

<sup>2</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0032-6791>.

<sup>3</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3089-3597>.

<sup>4</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5935-8849>.

<sup>5</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8840-4653>.

<sup>6</sup> Federal University of Maranhão. São Luís, MA, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1891-4201>.

<sup>7</sup> Federal University of Santa Catarina. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-186-8286>.

*Objetivo: descrever as características do mercado de trabalho para enfermeiros no Brasil, baseado nas vagas disponíveis no LinkedIn®. Método: trata-se de uma pesquisa documental on-line, de abordagem quanti-qualitativa, realizada em julho de 2020. Os dados quantitativos e qualitativos foram analisados por meio da estatística descritiva e análise textual, respectivamente. Resultados: identificaram-se 299 vagas, a maioria na Região Sudeste (62,3%), em hospitais (68,9%), para atuação assistencial (41,5%) e destinadas a enfermeiro júnior (91,3%). A média salarial identificada foi de R\$ 4.058,15(±1.389,82). Como pré-requisito, destacou-se a pós-graduação obrigatória (37,8%). Na análise qualitativa, sobressaíram-se as funções relacionadas ao cuidado direto ao paciente, mas também com o foco na supervisão/coordenação do cuidado. Conclusão: as principais oportunidades empregatícias estão na área assistencial. Formação em nível de especialização e competências gerenciais são valorizadas pelas instituições contratantes.*

*Descritores: Mercado de Trabalho. Emprego. Enfermeiras e Enfermeiros. Prática Profissional. Rede Social.*

*Objetivo: describir las características del mercado de trabajo de enfermeros en Brasil, a partir de las vacantes disponibles en LinkedIn®. Método: investigación documental en línea, con enfoque cuantitativo-cualitativo, realizada en julio de 2020. Los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos se analizaron mediante estadística descriptiva y análisis textual, respectivamente. Resultados: fueron identificadas 299 vacantes, la mayoría en la Región Sudeste (62,3%), en hospitales (68,9%), en el área de de cuidados (41,5%) y para enfermeros junior (91,3%). El salario medio identificado fue de R\$ 4.058,15 (±1.389,82). Como requisito previo destacaron los estudios de posgrado obligatorios (37,8%). En el análisis cualitativo se destacaron funciones relacionadas con la atención directa al paciente, pero también con foco en la supervisión/coordenación de la atención. Conclusión: las principales oportunidades de empleo se encuentran en el área de cuidados. Las instituciones contratantes valoran la formación especializada y las habilidades de gestión.*

*Descriptorios: Mercado de Trabajo. Empleo. Enfermeras y Enfermeros. Práctica Profesional. Red Social.*

## Introduction

The main health work result is health care, a non-material product that is consumed in the act of its production. Specifically, nursing makes up more than half of all health workers<sup>(1)</sup>. In Brazil, nursing, as a professional field, is made up of four categories, as follows: nurses, nursing technicians, nursing assistants and midwives, with nurses accounting for 25% of these professionals<sup>(2-3)</sup>.

Changes in society over the last decade have reinforced the need to transform various sectors of production, including healthcare. The reasons for this include the globalization of the economy, the introduction of new technologies, the development of social media and work processes that are constantly being updated<sup>(4)</sup>.

Due to these changes, there is a growing need for healthcare organizations to seek out qualified and competent professionals<sup>(5)</sup>. It is therefore important to discuss the ways in which nurses enter the job market, especially considering that the recruitment and selection processes for these professionals take place in more traditional cultural ways, through the submission of CVs

and interviews with managers at the hiring institutions<sup>(6)</sup>. The job market is the relationship between the organizations that make job vacancies available and the people who are looking for these opportunities. Some of the main aspects involved in the job market are prerequisites, professional qualifications, salaries and benefits, which can vary depending on the segment in which you work<sup>(7)</sup>.

With advances in technology and automation, various digital platforms have presented themselves as a way of connecting professional offers to the job market's demands, including LinkedIn®. This is one of the largest social networks in the world with the aim of connecting companies and employees, operating through the creation of profiles that are available for searches. Compared to traditional hiring models, the platform enables a recruitment process in a shorter space of time and at a reduced cost, as well as making it possible for people to apply who previously had difficulties due to geographical distance<sup>(8)</sup>.

After searching the Virtual Health Library (VHL), it was found that the most recent Brazilian studies on the nurses' labor market have focused mainly on the influential elements for their professional insertion<sup>(9)</sup>, on the opinion of managers of training institutions and employers on labor market trends for nurses<sup>(10)</sup>, on the job market development in specific areas, such as Gerontological Nursing<sup>(11)</sup>, and on the regulatory processes of professional practice<sup>(12)</sup>. No previous research using LinkedIn® as a source of study was identified. This justifies the relevance, innovation, and contribution of this study to contemporary discussions on employability and insertion into the job market for nurses in Brazil. The research question was therefore: What are the characteristics of the job market for nurses based on the job vacancies available on the LinkedIn® platform?

In view of this panorama, this study aimed to describe the characteristics of the job market for nurses in Brazil, based on the vacancies available on LinkedIn®.

## Method

This is an electronic, descriptive documentary study with a quantitative and qualitative approach, originated from a Course Conclusion Paper<sup>(13)</sup>. The study's development was guided by the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) and Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR) checklists.

The data was collected by the main author by searching for job vacancies on the LinkedIn® social network website in July 2020. To extract the data, filters were adopted, according to the options provided by the platform: Nurse, Job vacancies in the last week, Location in Brazil and Most relevant, the latter being used only for the purpose of sequentially organizing the order of vacancies.

The inclusion criteria were job vacancies for nurses, published in the last week of June 2020 in Brazil. Job vacancies that were not aimed at nurses were excluded, despite the application of the search filter at the time of the search, which led to a search restricted to professional nurses.

Of the 384 vacancies obtained, 85 were aimed at nursing technicians and plaster technicians. As a result, 299 vacancies were included in the study.

To organize the data analysis, the content advertised in each vacancy was extracted in a single moment into Microsoft Word 2016® and the data tabulated in Microsoft Office Excel® spreadsheets. The following categorical variables were extracted: Nature of contractor, Type of contract, Job level, Job title, Area of work, Working hours, Region, Type of company, Requirements for the position - Postgraduate degree, Postgraduate area, Previous experience, Foreign language skills and Computer skills. As a continuous variable, the advertised salary was analyzed. The qualitative analysis included the textual description of the vacancies.

The quantitative data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20.0. The qualitative data was analyzed using the software *Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires* (Iramuteq). Iramuteq allows for the processing of data from a textual corpus, enabling five types of analysis: Classic textual statistics; Group specificity research and confirmatory factor analysis; Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC); Word similarity analysis; and Word cloud<sup>(14)</sup>. In this study, the classic textual statistics and DHC analyses were applied.

In relation to ethical aspects, it should be noted that LinkedIn® is a public domain network with open access. At no time was contact made with any user of the social network to collect information. Therefore, there was no need for an Informed Consent Form or prior approval of the project by the Human Research Ethics Committee, as indicated by the National Health Council.

## Results

All 299 job vacancies analyzed were in the private sector. Most of the vacancies were managed by outsourced Human Resources companies (83.9%), without specifying the type of contract or working hours. There was a predominance of

vacancies for junior nurses (91.3%), working in the Southeast (62.3%), in care activities (41.5%) and without specifying the area of work (64.0%). In relation to the type of company that advertised

the vacancy, hospitals (68.9%) had the highest number of vacancies, followed by home care (12.7%). The full breakdown of vacancies is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** – Characterization of job vacancies for nurses in Brazil offered on LinkedIn®. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil - 2021. (N=299)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Nature of the contractor</b>		
Outsourced HR	251	83.9
Company HR	48	16.1
<b>Type of contract</b>		
Not specified	280	93.7
Working under the consolidation of Labor Laws	13	4.3
Others	6	2.0
<b>Job Level</b>		
Junior	273	91.3
Full-Senior	20	6.7
Not specified	6	2.0
<b>Job position</b>		
Care Nurse	124	41.5
Home care nurse	47	15.7
Nurses	38	12.7
Occupational Nurse	20	6.7
Nurse Auditor	19	6.4
Nurse supervisor/manager/coordinator	15	5.0
Others	36	12.0
<b>Performance area</b>		
Not specified	191	64.0
Intensive Care	37	12.4
Obstetrics	15	5.0
Urgency and Emergency	13	4.3
Surgical Center	10	3.3
Others	33	11.0
<b>Workday</b>		
Not specified	252	84.3
12x36 hours	24	8.0
Others	23	7.7
<b>Region</b>		
Southeast	186	62.3
South	63	21.1
Midwest	21	7.0
Northeast	21	7.0
North	4	1.3
Not specified	4	1.3
<b>Type of company</b>		
Hospital	206	68.9
Home care	38	12.7
Not specified	25	8.4
Health plan operators	13	4.3
Others	17	5.7

Source: the authors.

Many vacancies had no application requirements. Among the requirements specified, a specialization degree was mandatory for 113 (37.8%) vacancies. Among the areas of postgraduate study requested, there was no specific area. Previous experience

was indicated as mandatory in 109 (36.5%) vacancies and computer skills in 47 (15.7%) advertisements. In addition, Foreign language skills was indicated as compulsory or desirable in 7 (2.4%) vacancies (Table 2).

**Table 2** – Job requirements for nurses in Brazil on LinkedIn®. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil - 2021. (N=299)

Variable	n	%
<b>Graduate Studies</b>		
Not specified	163	54.5
Mandatory	113	37.8
Desirable	23	7.7
<b>Postgraduate area</b>		
Not specified	214	71.7
Occupational Nursing	13	4.3
Obstetrics	13	4.3
Others	46	15.4
<b>Previous experience</b>		
Not specified	161	53.8
Mandatory	109	36.5
Desirable	29	9.7
<b>Foreign language skills</b>		
Not specified	292	97.6
Mandatory	5	1.7
Desirable	2	0.7
<b>Computer skills</b>		
Not specified	221	73.9
Mandatory	47	15.7
Desirable	31	10.4

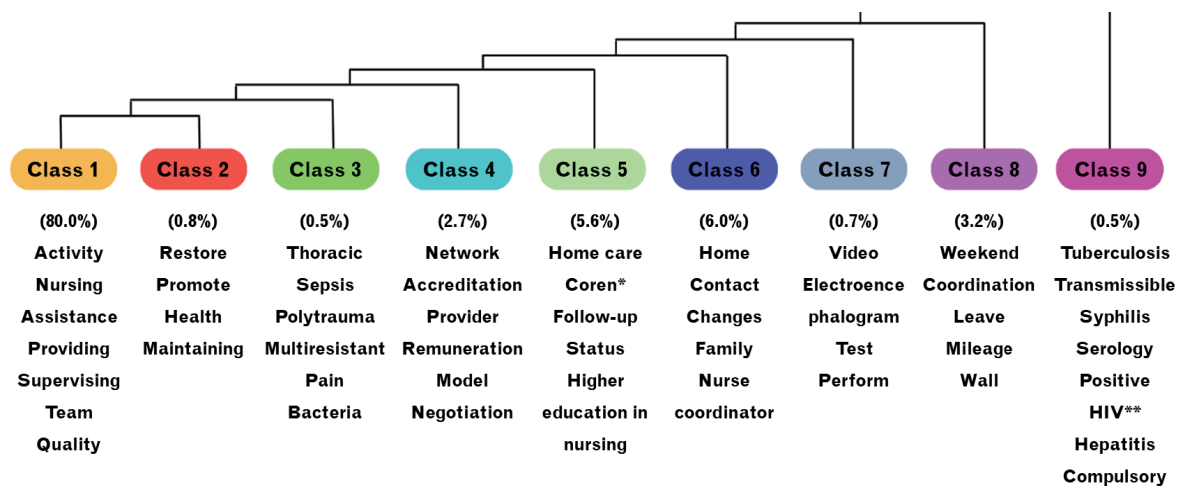
Source: the authors.

In relation to salary, the remuneration offered to the candidate was specified in 62 (20.7%) vacancies, ranging from R\$600.00 to R\$7,000.00. The mean salary was R\$4,058.15 ( $\pm 1,389.82$ ), with the minimum earn in force at the time being R\$1,045.00. Of the total, 277 (92.6%) vacancies had descriptive text specifying the characteristics of the vacancy. For the qualitative results, the analysis, processed using Iramuteq, showed

751 text segments. The most frequent words were Patient (n=389), Nursing (n=337), Perform (n=296), Team (n=224) and Care (n=148).

The DHC analysis included 99.7% of the text segments and showed nine semantic classes. In this analysis, Class 1 was the last class to be differentiated and included 80.0% of the textual material. The other classes ranged from 0.8% to 6.0% (Figure 1).

**Figure 1** – Dendrogram of job descriptions for nurses in Brazil offered on LinkedIn®. Florianópolis, Brazil, 2021.



Source: the authors.

\* Regional Nursing Council (*Conselho Regional de Enfermagem*, Coren)

\*\* Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

Class 1 encompassed most of the competencies related to nursing care, with an emphasis on activities related to direct patient care and the words “Supervising”, “Team” and “Quality” standing out. Thus, it can be inferred that nurses are expected to provide direct patient care and supervise the nursing team, indicating a search for professionals who can develop effective leadership in managing the work environment, in order to contribute to the quality of care provided.

## Discussion

In relation to the sector of work, it was observed that all the job vacancies advertised on the LinkedIn® platform were from private sector companies. The work of statutory employees in the Unified Health System (*Sistema Único de Saúde*, SUS) is governed by the federal constitution, in order to guarantee the principle of impersonality in public administration. The SUS can also count on employees who are contract workers, cooperative workers, service providers and third-party employees<sup>(15)</sup>. However, these vacancies are advertised through public notices, guaranteeing equal conditions for all candidates,

which explains why all the vacancies included in this study were allocated to the private sector.

Although most of the job vacancies did not specify the type of contract, there are two predominant types of employment in the Brazilian private sector. In first place, there are permanent contracts, accounting for 56.1% of the nursing staff working in the private sector, and in second place, there are service providers, with 30.5% of employment contracts in this sector<sup>(16)</sup>.

As for the vacancies’ professional level, the Junior category predominated. Junior level vacancies represent an opportunity for nurses with little experience to enter the job market, as this level is aimed at professionals at the start of their careers, with up to five years’ training<sup>(9)</sup>. As for the vacancies’ professional level, the Junior category predominated. Junior level vacancies represent an opportunity for nurses with little experience to enter the job market, as this level is aimed at professionals at the start of their careers, with up to five years’ training. A greater number of vacancies for nurses with no experience may have been due to the pandemic, which required the immediate hiring of nursing staff. The Full-Senior level, intended for nurses with six to nine years’ experience, was also present in



vacancies intended mainly for nurse supervisors, suggesting that professional experience is a prerequisite valued for hierarchically superior managerial positions.

In relation to the type of company, this study showed that the hospital is the main place where nurses work in the private sector. This result is in line with the findings of a national study which found that more than half of nurses work in hospitals (53.7%)<sup>(16)</sup>.

New, non-traditional places of work were identified in the job vacancies, such as popular clinics. The low cost of consultations at popular clinics has made them an option both for the population in metropolitan areas and also for a section of the population living in the Northeast and Center-West regions. In general, they are aimed mainly at classes C, D and a portion of E. Investors are also attracted to the creation of new spaces within this segment, whose business model, focused on simple consultations, is an option that allows more control over costs, increasing the frequency of existing forms of work, whether provided manually or intellectually, that is, people exchange their labor/experience for a salary and/or benefit<sup>(17)</sup>.

Health operators also stood out in the advertisements analyzed. In 2018, the health insurance sector ended the year with 47.37 million beneficiaries and 747 active operators. Over the last four years, the segment has seen a 21.4% growth in healthcare plans, justified by the demand generated by the increase in the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases, the ageing of the population and changes in lifestyle habits<sup>(18)</sup>.

Another highlight was home care. In this sector, home care is provided by a healthcare professional to a patient who needs monitoring and assistance during a treatment or recovery process at home, whether temporary or ongoing. The home care sector has grown significantly over the years in Brazil, with an increase in the number of companies and jobs between 2012 and 2018. It's important to note that this modality allows for a reduction in health costs, reduces clinical complications and shortens the patient's recovery time<sup>(19)</sup>.

In terms of job title, there was a predominance of job vacancies characterized as care nurses, followed by the home care category. This demand can be explained by the fact that the professional has a generalist background, allowing them to work in a variety of care scenarios and specificities. These data corroborate the findings of a study with graduates of a university, in which, when analyzing the positions held in their first, second and third jobs, there was a predominance of care nurses in the first three jobs in 87.2%, 82.7% and 80.0% of cases, respectively<sup>(20)</sup>.

Although they represent a small proportion of the vacancies advertised, nurses appointed to managerial positions are also gaining prominence in the job market as supervisors, unit managers and coordinators. The managerial role allows them to organize the work process politically and technically, making it more qualified and productive<sup>(6)</sup>. In this context, nurses have taken on an important role in health services, becoming the communication link that aims to ensure proper management, aligned with the expectations of the institution, tactical collaborators and clients, as well as being responsible for managing nursing services and taking measures that integrate the administrative, care and teaching/research areas<sup>(21)</sup>.

Most of the vacancies analyzed did not specify the area in which they worked. In those that did, there was a predominance of intensive care, obstetrics, urgent and emergency care, and operating rooms. In this sense, a national study recorded a significant number of care nurses distributed mainly in intensive care units, urgent and emergency hospital care, critical care, intensive care and operating rooms<sup>(16)</sup>. In addition, it should be noted that the search period took place during the first months of the new coronavirus pandemic, a period of intense increase in demand for nursing assistants, especially to meet the hiring needs for work in Intensive Care Units.

As for the working hours of the job vacancies analyzed, few advertisements specified this information. Of those that did, 12/36-hour working hours predominated. Among the changes that have taken place in recent decades in the job market, the increase in the working hours of

nursing professionals stands out, which negatively affects the professional, social and family life of the individual, impacting on the quality of care and patient safety<sup>(22-23)</sup>.

When analyzing the regions to which the job vacancies were allocated, there was a concentration in the Southeast. This region currently accounts for around half of the nursing workforce, with 49% of the country's jobs for nurses, nursing technicians and nursing assistants<sup>(24-25)</sup>. Without a broader supply-demand analysis, it could be considered that this result is related to the concentration of vacancies in this region.

In relation to the job requirements, post-graduate qualifications and previous experience are among the determinants shown to have the greatest impact on hiring. Hiring a nurse with training in the specific area of the position or with experience in the field increases the chances of the candidate already joining the company with the expected performance, as well as saving resources on in-house training<sup>(10)</sup>.

A study that sought to understand nurses' difficulties in getting a job showed that around 10.5% of professionals reported not being able to get a job due to a lack of specializations on their CV, and 18.9% also mentioned a lack of professional experience as one of the hindering aspects<sup>(16)</sup>. In this sense, professional updating and the search for new knowledge are fundamental for nurses to occupy new spaces in the profession<sup>(26)</sup>.

When analyzing the mean earnings of job vacancies for nurses, there was a wide variation in values. In the field of nursing, professional valorization, adequate working conditions, maximum weekly working hours and a salary floor are still achievements to be reached by the profession. In view of this, there is an urgent need to discuss the regulation of a 30-hour working week and a salary floor for nursing professionals, with the aim of strengthening the professional category and guaranteeing the quality of health care<sup>(24)</sup>.

In the qualitative analysis, using Iramuteq, the profile of the vacancies focused on developing direct patient care activities, but related to the supervision of the nursing team and the search for quality care. In this sense, it is important

to emphasize that the professional practice of nurses is closely related to the care management and coordination/supervision of care in health institutions. Supervision promotes a supportive working environment and improved standards of nursing care<sup>(27-28)</sup>. In addition to caring for patients, the job market expects nurses to develop actions aimed at planning nursing care, sizing staff, educating staff, providing leadership, managing materials and evaluating the results of nursing actions<sup>(28-29)</sup>.

A study limitation is the lack of uniformity and information restrictions on some of the job vacancies advertised on LinkedIn®, as well as the fact that the search was restricted to a certain period of time. Another aspect to be considered was the fact that the search was carried out at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a factor that may have reflected on the quantity and quality of advertisements on the platform.

The central contribution of this study was to offer a comprehensive view of the job market dynamics for nurses in Brazil, based on the analysis of vacancies made available on LinkedIn®, a professional platform that has gained increasing prominence. Based on the results obtained, the work highlights the need to carry out more in-depth and comprehensive job market analyses, with a view to problematizing both the nature of the nursing work process and the current characteristics of the market. There is an urgent need for studies that investigate the positive and negative aspects of each segment and sector, identifying trends that can guide both the strategies of companies and the decisions of nursing professionals in relation to insertion, relocation, or reinsertion into the job market.

## Conclusion

The aim of this study was to describe the characteristics of the job market for nurses in Brazil, based on the vacancies offered on LinkedIn®. Although the hospital is still the place that traditionally employs the most nurses throughout Brazil, this investigation's results indicate the growth of new places of work, such as popular clinics and health operators. The



majority of vacancies in the care area were for professionals with little experience. However, opportunities for managerial positions were also identified, reinforcing the importance of the nurse's managerial role.

In terms of region, most of the vacancies were concentrated in the south-east and south. Specialized training and managerial skills are valued by the hiring institutions. Prerequisites include a postgraduate degree, computer skills and previous experience. The mean earnings identified were approximately four times the minimum wage. Nursing is an institutionalized profession, with a strong presence in formal employment structures, whether public private, or philanthropic, reinforcing the fact that employability is a central issue for this professional category.

### Collaborations:

1 – conception and planning of the project: Bruno de Campos Gobato e José Luís Guedes dos Santos;

2 – analysis and interpretation of data: Bruno de Campos Gobato, Caroline Cechinel-Peiter, Francys Kassick, Fernando Henrique Antunes Menegon e José Luís Guedes dos Santos;

3 – writing and/or critical review: Bruno de Campos Gobato, Caroline Cechinel-Peiter, Francys Kassick, Gabriela Marcellino de Melo Lanzoni, Fernando Henrique Antunes Menegon, Carlos Leonardo Figueiredo Cunha e José Luís Guedes dos Santos;

4 – approval of the final version: Bruno de Campos Gobato, Caroline Cechinel-Peiter, Francys Kassick, Gabriela Marcellino de Melo Lanzoni, Fernando Henrique Antunes Menegon, Carlos Leonardo Figueiredo Cunha e José Luís Guedes dos Santos.

### Conflicts of interests

There are no conflicts of interest.

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