

## Contextual references for the management of the scientific publication of medical sciences teacher

Referentes contextuales para la gestión de la publicación científica del docente de ciencias médicas

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The scientific publications of the teachers are indicators in the systems of evaluation of the quality of university management.

**Objective:** To analyze the contextual referents of the scientific publication of the teaching staff at the Medical Sciences University of Ciego de Ávila.

**Methods:** A descriptive-quantitative study was carried out, based on the documentary analysis technique, according to the following phases: determination of the purpose of the documentary analysis, statement of the problem, establishment of the analysis categories, the search protocol and the inclusion, exclusion and data extraction criteria. 272 documents were analyzed: normative (6), methodological (28) and administrative (238). The documentary record was designed, the references and data were extracted,



and the analytical-synthetic and inductive-deductive theoretical methods were applied for data processing and structuring the resulting information.

**Results:** The normative documents demonstrated a favorable legal framework for the promotion of the scientific publications of the university professors, unlike the methodological and administrative documents, which revealed insufficient intention in this sense.

**Conclusion:** The problem under study has a multidimensional nature: it is a shared space of administrative, academic, scientific-technical interest, without sufficient coherence to favor the quality of university management and the increase of scientific publications of the teachers of the Medical Sciences University of Ciego de Ávila.

**Key words:** documentary analysis, teaching staff, publications, health, universities.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Las publicaciones científicas de los docentes constituyen indicadores en los sistemas de evaluación de la calidad de la gestión universitaria.

**Objetivo:** Analizar los referentes contextuales de la publicación científica de los docentes de la Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de Ciego de Ávila.

**Métodos:** Se realizó un estudio descriptivo, cuantitativo, sustentado en la técnica de análisis documental, según las siguientes fases: determinación del propósito del análisis documental, planteamiento del problema, establecimiento de las categorías de análisis, del protocolo de búsqueda y los criterios de inclusión, exclusión y extracción de datos. Se analizaron 272 documentos: normativos (6), metodológicos (28) y administrativos (238). Así mismo, se diseñó el registro documental, se extrajeron las referencias y datos, se aplicaron los métodos teóricos analítico-sintético e inductivo-deductivo para el procesamiento de los datos y la estructuración de la información resultante.

**Resultados:** Los documentos normativos demostraron un marco legal favorable para el fomento de las publicaciones científicas del docente universitario, a diferencia de los documentos metodológicos y administrativos, que revelaron una insuficiente intencionalidad en este sentido.

**Conclusiones:** La problemática objeto de estudio posee una naturaleza multidimensional: es un espacio compartido de interés administrativo, académico, científico-técnico, sin la suficiente coherencia para favorecer la calidad de la gestión universitaria y el incremento de las publicaciones científicas de los docentes de la Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de Ciego de Ávila.

**Palabras clave:** análisis de documentos, docentes, publicaciones, salud, universidades.



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## INTRODUCTION

Raising the scientific potential of the academic community and systematizing good practices in educational innovation is a goal of Cuban institutions in charge of professional training for the healthcare system. The knowledge emerging from this work acquires connotation when it is socialized through scientific publication.<sup>(1)</sup>

Making the knowledge generated in universities visible contributes to their social recognition, the consolidation of their institutional identity, and, consequently, to their scientific prestige. Therefore, it constitutes an indicator considered in the system of evaluation of the quality of university management and for the development of international rankings.<sup>(2)</sup>

The topic is a subject of interest in Cuban and Latin American medical universities, where there is concern about the increase in scientific publications by the teaching staff; hence its importance and relevance.<sup>(1,3,4)</sup>

Among the most recent research antecedents, bibliographic and bibliometric analyses predominate in specific disciplines, journals, and institutions.<sup>(5-8)</sup> There are also proposals for professional improvement related to the training of the teaching staff for the increase of their scientific publications.<sup>(9,10)</sup>

At the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego de Ávila, limitations have been observed within the teaching staff for the dissemination of science through scientific publication, which indicates the need to deepen the knowledge of organizational culture and management in this context.<sup>(11,12)</sup>

Knowledge is not only found in documents and databases; it is also present in institutional processes, practices, and norms.<sup>(13)</sup> Hence the interest in investigating the connotation of scientific publications in the context of the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego de Ávila.

The objective of this article is to describe the contextual references of the scientific publications of the teaching staff at the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego de Ávila.



## METHODS

During 2024, a descriptive, quantitative study was carried out, based on the technique of documentary analysis. The following stages were followed [adaptation of the proposal by Martínez-Corona, et al.<sup>(14)</sup>]:

Phase 1. Determination of the goal of the documentary analysis: determination of a background for doctoral research regarding the management of methodological work at the management levels for the scientific publications of the teacher, in the context of the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego de Ávila.

Phase 2. Problem statement: How do the normative, methodological, and administrative documents reflect the management of the scientific publications of the teaching staff in the context of the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego de Ávila?

Phase 3. Establishment of analysis categories/Setting analysis categories:

- References to scientific publications: mentions and allusions to the scientific production and scientific publication of the teacher, related to demands, requirements, projections, objectives, priorities, actions, published results, among other contents of the documents.
- Coherence between normative, methodological, and administrative documents regarding scientific publications.

Phase 4. Establishment of the search protocol: official documents were located, in digital format, current or not, kept in the university archives. The criteria of temporality (prepared between 2014 and 2024) and representativeness (prepared by different levels of management: ministerial, university, faculties, teaching departments, and programs) were considered.

Normative documents: They regulate institutional processes and express an official position at a micro or macro level<sup>(15)</sup> (resolutions and regulations on university accreditation, teaching categories, professorial evaluation, and methodological work).

Methodological documents: They contain procedures and guidelines for the development of a specific process or activity, as well as the planning of the methodological work at different levels of management (methodological guidelines and methodological work plans).

Administrative documents: They reflect the dynamics of institutional work (professor evaluation certificates, individual development plans; annual plans for improvement, science balance reports, and self-evaluation reports).

Phase 7. Establishment of document selection and review criteria:

Inclusion criteria: documents whose content was related to the methodological work at the management levels and adjusted to the criteria of temporality and representativeness outlined above.



Exclusion criteria: documents without identifying elements regarding the date and level of issue; incomplete documents or documents lacking relevant information; certificates of evaluation of teachers with the category of instructor and of teachers not evaluated; administrative documents generated at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Morón.

Data extraction criteria: textual and non-textual citations related to: the scientific publications of the professors and the scientific output of the teaching staff.

The study unit consisted of 272 documents: normative (6), methodological (28) y administrative (238).

Phase 8. Design of the documentary record:

Analysis sheet: management structure that issues it, year of preparation, type of document, name of the document, types of references, and analytical observations.

Analysis sheet for professorial evaluations: year, teaching department, teaching category, overall evaluation, evaluation in the field of scientific and research work for professors without publications, classification of publications by type, recommendations of the evaluators, and analytical observations.

Phase 9. Extraction and recording of references and data:

Concrete and intentional references: consisting of ideas with explicit, clear, precise, and guiding indications.

Insufficient references: References to increase publications as a priority, purpose, or task, without other actions or projections to guarantee their fulfillment.

Minimal References: Consisting of isolated, insufficiently guiding phrases that lack clarity regarding institutional management.

No References: Absence of references on the scientific publications of the teaching staff.

For the analysis of the professorial evaluation certificate, the following were considered:

Correspondence of the evaluation in the field of scientific-research work with the type of scientific publications of the teacher.

- Evaluative and guiding references for the teacher regarding the scientific publications considered in the evaluation.
- Recommendations from the evaluation related to the scientific publications of the teacher.

Phase 10. Verification of the underlying categorization. For the category References to scientific publications, the quantitative results were compared by column for the analysis of reference types in relation to document types.



For the category Coherence between documents, the corresponding analytical observations were considered. The content analysis method was used: the analytical observations in the documentary record were labeled based on terminological and sense recurrence and grouped into the following ideographic notions: Requirement, Function, Priority, Weakness, Recommendation, Actions, Published Results, Other.

The synthesis of both procedures allowed the construction of meaning in the form of coincidences, divergences, inferences, and trends.

Analytical observations corresponding to individual development plans were excluded from the analysis, as their structuring by categories (methodological work, scientific research work, improvement) could lead to the duplication of information already collected. Furthermore, differentiating the actions based on professor characteristics would have increased the heterogeneity of the labeling and, consequently, the risk of distortion of the information.

Analytical-synthetic and inductive-deductive theoretical methods were applied to synthesize the collected information, which is expressed in percentages.

## RESULTS

### Review of normative documents

The procedure for the annual evaluation of university professors who teach at higher medical education centers and other institutions within the National Health System (Resolution 718/2015) establishes, for the category of research and innovation work, take into account the quality of the scientific publications produced; that is, it does not require the number or type of scientific publications, which is why it is considered an insufficient reference.

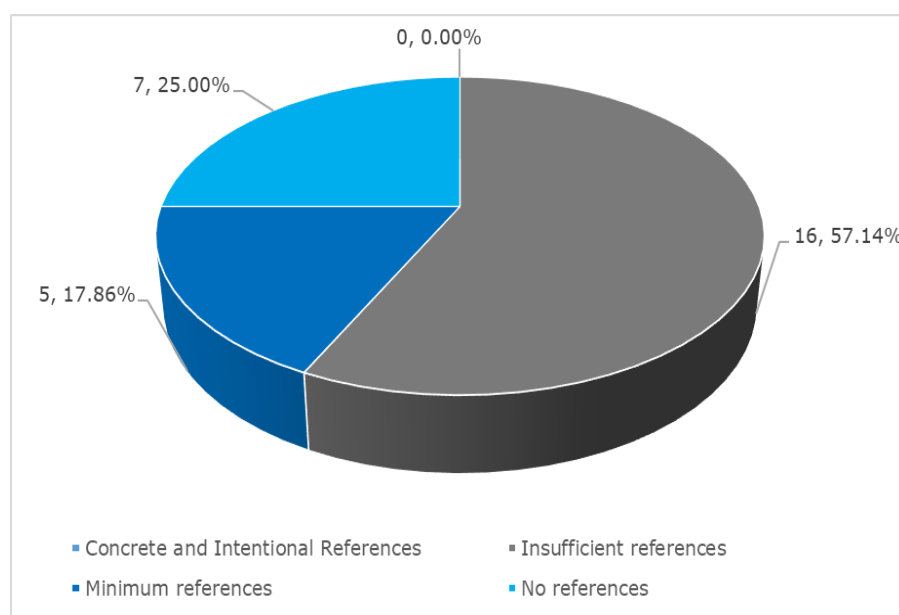
The regulations for the application of teaching categories in higher education (Resolution 145/2023) establishes, as a more rigorous requirement, the publication of three scientific articles in journals referenced in databases of recognized prestige and international visibility, or specialized publications (without specifying the timeframe), or book chapters, monographs, teaching materials, curricula, and programs.

Five normative documents refer to scientific publications in a clear and precise way, considered concrete and intentional references. The Regulation of the System of Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (Resolution 160/2023) contains the largest number of specific references to the scientific publications of the teaching staff.

### Review of methodological documents

None of the 28 methodological documents contain specific references to the scientific publications of the teachers. Sixteen contain insufficient references, mostly methodological work plans from different management levels; five contain minimal references, and seven contain no references. (Figure 1)





**Fig. 1.** References to scientific publications in methodological documents.

The 14 methodological work plans analyzed contain insufficient references: increasing faculty scientific publications is declared a priority, or among the weaknesses; however, no actions or forms of control are planned for its implementation and transformation.

The work system of the university group of quality management (2019-2024) provides coverage for transforming the problem by proposing to align strategic planning, quality management, and internal control as a single university management system by process, and ensuring the training and improvement of professionals.

#### Review of administrative documents

Six university professional development plans (from 2018 to 2023) were reviewed, which include three actions related to preparing faculty for scientific publication.

References to scientific publications in the annual science and innovation balance reports of the university were as follows:

- 2018: A slight increase in publications is noted.
- 2019: Projection for the period 2020-2030: Reach volumes of scientific publications in referenced journals with an indicator between 0.5-1.0 publications per researcher.
- 2021: Between 2020 and 2021, only 39 published articles and 6 event proceedings were reported (weakness).
- 2022: An indicator that does not yet reach the required levels in the year under analysis.

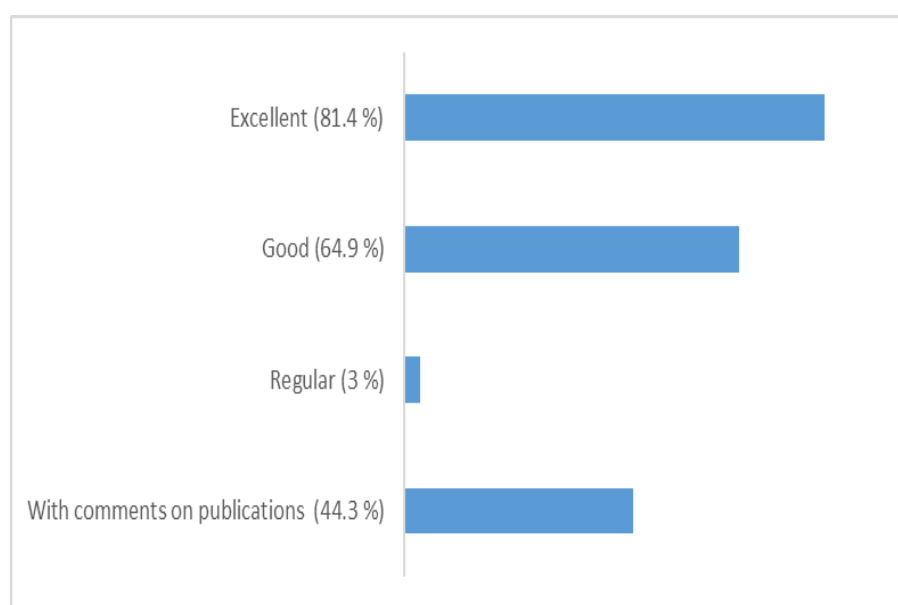


- 2023: No references.

In the self-assessment report of the university (2019), the insufficient number of publications of the teaching staff in internationally recognized journals is acknowledged as a weakness; in addition, it contains contingency, maintenance, and development actions, with the aim of increasing scientific publications. The 2023 report quantitatively reveals advances and setbacks by programs between 2016 and 2023.

The professorial evaluation certificates (2022 and 2023) were analyzed, corresponding to seven departments and the following teaching categories: Full Professor: 11 (8%), Associate Professor: 71 (49%), and Assistant Professor: 63 (43%), for a total of 145.

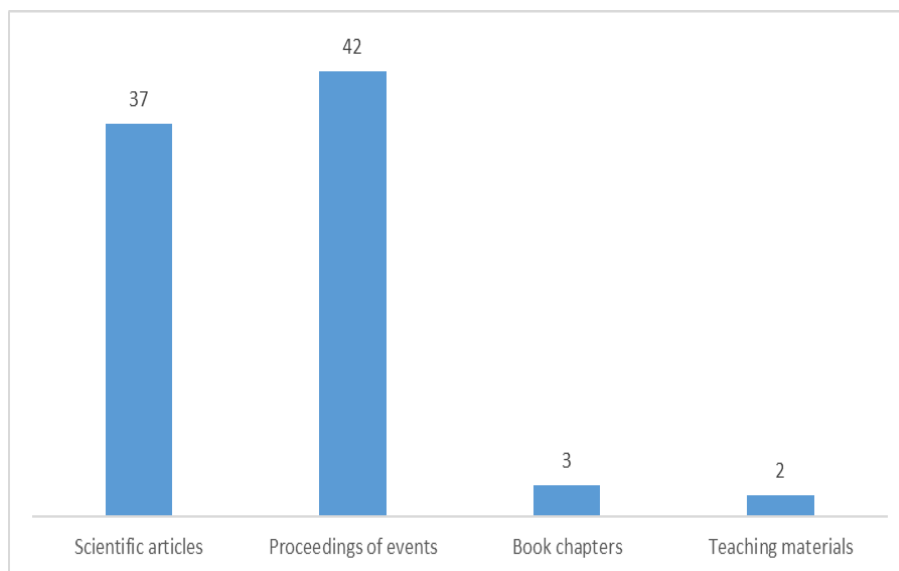
Figure 2 shows the evaluation in the area of scientific research work and the indications about the publications.



**Fig. 2.** Evaluation in the category of scientific research work and comments.

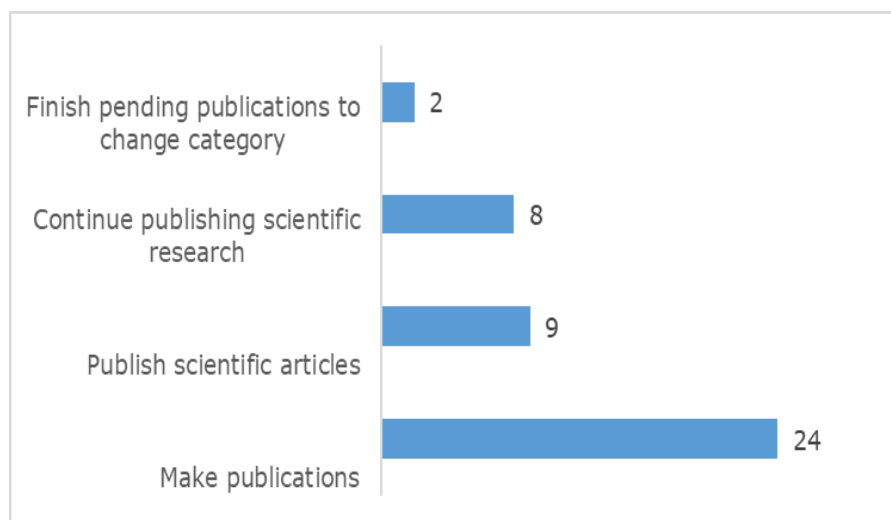
In 125 evaluation certificates (86.2%), data on scientific publications are not reported. Figure 3 shows the publications by type; in the published articles, trends can be observed, such as publications in journals of the own Ciego de Ávila Medical University or in journals from the region.





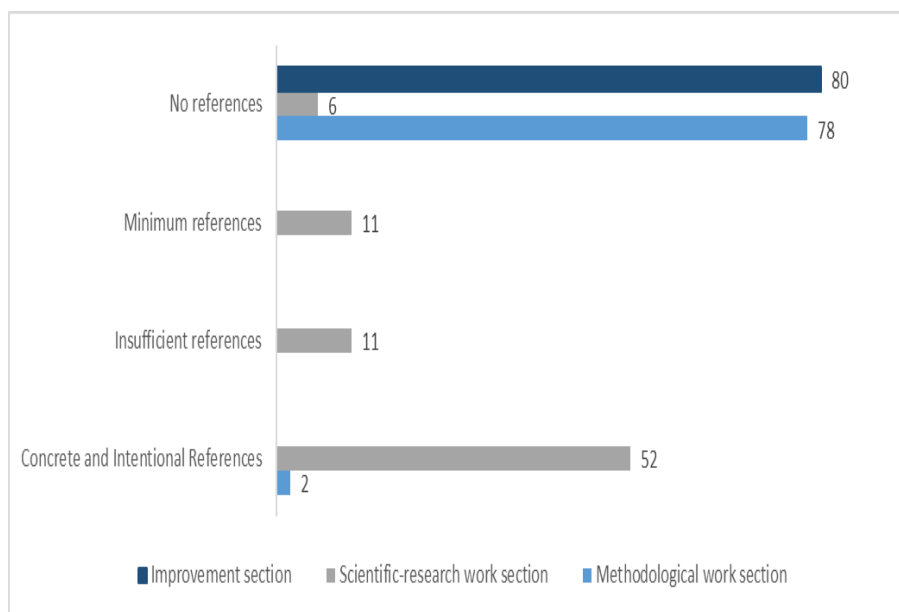
**Fig. 3.** Publications considered in the evaluation certificates.

When evaluating the publications of the teachers, minimal references were observed, such as the following: currently working on an article (8); has one (or more) submitted articles (10). Occasionally, the title is included, or it is said the professor has a publication, without referring the corresponding data and without evidence in the academic record. The recommendations of the evaluators regarding the scientific publications of the professor are shown in figure 4.



**Fig. 4.** Recommendations of the evaluators regarding scientific publications.

In the development plans, the references to the scientific publications of the teacher are concentrated in the area of scientific-research work, as shown in figure 5.



**Fig. 5.** References to scientific publications in development plans.

The analysis of the types of references to scientific publications (Table 1) revealed that specific references to scientific publications predominated in the normative documents; insufficient references in methodological documents; and minimum references in administrative documents.

**Table 1.** References to scientific publications by type of document

| Type of document         | Type of reference |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
|                          | CR                | %    | IR | %    | MR | %    | NR | %    |
| Administrative documents | 78                | 32.7 | 43 | 18.6 | 69 | 29   | 48 | 20.2 |
| Methodological documents | -                 | -    | 16 | 57.1 | 5  | 17.9 | 7  | 25   |
| Normative documents      | 5                 | 83.3 | 1  | 16.6 | -  | -    | -  | -    |
| Total                    | 83                | 30.5 | 60 | 25.2 | 74 | 27.2 | 55 | 20.2 |



A match was found between the references and the nature of the documents (requirements in normative documents, recommendations in administrative documents). Methodological documents and administrative documents coincide in the predominance of insufficient and minimal references, as well as in the lack of them.

Divergences were also found, especially in their use within the documents: between the declaration as a priority and the planning of actions; between weakness and recommendation (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Use of references to scientific publications in documents

| Use of references | Normative documents | Methodological documents | Administrative documents | Total |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Requirement       | 3                   | -                        | -                        | 3     |
| Function          | 2                   | -                        | -                        | 2     |
| Priority          | -                   | 20                       | 1                        | 21    |
| Weakness          | -                   | -                        | 4                        | 4     |
| Recommendation    | -                   | -                        | 41                       | 41    |
| Actions           | -                   | -                        | 2                        | 2     |
| Result            | -                   | -                        | 43                       | 43    |
| Other             | 1                   | 1                        | 18                       | 20    |

The findings described allowed identifying the following trends in relation to the reflection of the management of scientific publication in the analyzed documents:

Stipulations in normative documents that are not supported by methodological and administrative documents.

- The results published during the period (administrative documents) contrast with the priority nature of the publications declared in the methodological work.
- Imbalance in the recognition of scientific publications as a weakness and as a priority.
- Diversity of viewpoints and insufficient precision regarding scientific publications, for example: increasing the participation of the teaching staff in scientific research and publications to promote their scientific categorization; an indicator that does not reach yet the required levels in the year under analysis; one manuscript is under review.
- Insufficient coherence between the improvement actions and methodological work related to scientific publications, the published results, and the indications of the evaluation findings.



## DISCUSSION

Documentary analysis is not only about the extraction of data and ideas, but also about the construction and representation of knowledge in a different way.<sup>(16)</sup> In this sense, the analysis of the normative, methodological, and administrative documents that regulate and organize institutional management in the context of the Medical Sciences University of Ciego de Ávila has provided, through a systematic review procedure, a set of clues that allow to characterize the context in relation to the scientific publications of the teaching staff.

The normative documents provide a favorable legal framework for the promotion of scientific publications among university professors, although the procedure for the annual evaluation of university professors in the National Health System (Resolution 718/2015) is not consistent with the current requirements on the subject of publications.

The regulations for the application of the teaching categories of higher education (Resolution 145/2023) accept "specialized publications," a term that is not defined; it accepts monographs, teaching materials, curricula, and programs whose quality requirements are subject to the consideration of the review boards. The authors consider that this discourages the publication of scientific articles and contradicts the growing emphasis on scientific publications by the teaching staff in the System for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education.<sup>(17)</sup>

In the methodological documents, the subject of scientific publications lacks the necessary systematicity and intentionality. In the methodological work plans, the increase in the scientific publications of the teaching staff is declared as a priority, as established at the university level, but an essential interpretation of its meaning is not appreciated, according to the real situation of each area and level of methodological work.

The planning of scientific-methodological work reveals limitations consistent with other research, in that only the general intentions of participation of the professors in scientific methodological seminars and conferences are reflected as figures of scientific-methodological work.<sup>(18)</sup> In this sense, it is possible to share the criterion that, if the methodological work were carried out with the enhancement of scientific-methodological activity, scientific publications of the teaching staff in the context of medical sciences could be increased.<sup>(19)</sup>

In agreement with the results of the present research, Porras-Pérez et al.<sup>(20)</sup> found deficiencies in the development of the Methodological Work Plan, which limit its quality as an instrument for the scientific and pedagogical preparation of teachers, and that the scientific-methodological work does not respond fundamentally to the lines, problems, or topics of research.

As part of the administrative documents analyzed, the development plans do not contain sufficient actions for preparing professors for scientific publication, a lack also identified by Armiñana-García, et al.<sup>(9)</sup>



In accordance with the challenge of Cuban higher education to contribute to the growth of scientific and technological infrastructure and scientific production,<sup>(21)</sup> the balance reports on the activity of science and innovation activity were taken into account, in relation to the scientific publications of the teaching staff. The results of the analysis reveal opportunities for improvement, given that in the process of innovation management, it is essential to direct administrative processes,<sup>(22)</sup> if a greater contribution to knowledge production is to be achieved.

The self-assessment reports reflect dissatisfaction with scientific publications; they serve as evidence that this indicator is not immediately achieved,<sup>(23)</sup> so it is essential to design agile and sustainable processes for its increase and for the positioning of the university at the national and international levels.<sup>(24)</sup> A systematic review aimed at analyzing current challenges in accreditation recognizes the interest of the studies consulted in relation to the quantity and quality of publications.<sup>(25)</sup>

The certificates of professorial evaluations show an insufficient amount of scientific articles and inaccuracies in the statements and recommendations of the professorial evaluations. Similar results were found by Aravena-Gaete and Garín-Sallán<sup>(26)</sup>, who recognize weaknesses in the reports issued by the institution to provide feedback to professors, deficiencies in more qualitative analysis, and argue that this information requires more time and dedication to prepare.

The importance of professorial evaluation is recognized for its potential contribution to improving knowledge and diagnosis of the quality of a center and favoring the internal review process, its functioning, and even enabling the implementation of measures to improve it.<sup>(27)</sup> From that perspective, the professorial evaluation in the medical sciences should be an incentive for professional improvement with a view to the quality of performance of university professors.<sup>(28)</sup> These authors identified that the area with the greatest difficulties in the professorial evaluation was that of research and innovation work, due to the insufficient number of scientific publications of the teachers, as was also identified in the present study.

Some of the causes of the low rate of publications by university professors have been related to leadership, management practices, and communication.<sup>(29)</sup> In the criterion of the authors, the process of professorial evaluation, the elaboration of the self-evaluation and the evaluation certificate, are of essential importance to unite the scientific-methodological work, the research activity, the improvement and the university accreditation system, what is only possible through management practices focused on clear, precise, timely and guiding communication.

The data show that the development plans of the teaching staff lack adequate projection of scientific publications; reference is made to national and international publications, an imprecise term that provides little guidance for the teachers and is dissonant with the language of the accreditation system of the quality university management.

The annual science balance reports, self-assessment reports, and teacher development plans reflect deficiencies in the management of publications and insufficient intentionality regarding institutional needs related to the provisions of the accreditation system of university management.



The results support the arguments made by Chávez-Godoy and Sehara-Martínez<sup>(19)</sup> regarding the little influence of the scientific result of the professor in his final individual evaluation and the inconsistencies between the individual development plan of the professor and his publications.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that, according to the methodological and administrative documents, the management of the methodological work in the studied context requires greater complementarity with the provisions established in the main normative documents. In particular, there is a discrepancy between the stated objectives and priorities in the methodological work plans regarding the scientific publication of the teaching staff and the planned scientific-methodological work activities.

This result will be complemented by an analysis of the perceptions of the teaching staff and administrators regarding the management of scientific publication in the context of the medical university, in order to deepen their understanding of the research subject matter.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### Author contribution

María de Jesús Pérez-Herrera: conceptualization, research, methodology, resources, supervision, visualization, writing of the original draft, writing, review and editing.



Martha María Ávila-Rodríguez: conceptualization, research, methodology, project management, visualization, writing of the original draft and writing, review and editing.

Reinaldo Pablo García-Pérez: research, methodology, writing, review and editing.

Benerando Sevilla-Pérez: funding acquisition, research, writing, review, and editing.

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