



CENSUS OF SPEECH THERAPISTS OF THE SICILY REGION

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Speech therapy; Sicily; Census

Abstract

The survey on the employment status of speech therapists who carry out their professional activity in Sicily was conceived by the Commission of the Register of Speech Therapists of the TSRM-PSTRP Order of Palermo, in collaboration with the Commissions of the Register of Speech Therapists of the TSRM-PSTRP Orders throughout Sicily, i.e.: Board of Directors of Speech Therapists of Catania, Caltanissetta-Agrigento, Enna, Messina, Ragusa, Syracuse and Trapani. This survey represents the second edition after that of 2020. The intent is to make a constant evaluation over time, but also longitudinally useful for the reflections necessary for the governance of the profession together with the regional institutions with which it intends to establish an active collaboration.

The census of Sicilian speech therapists has proven to be a very useful tool for identifying important information and data regarding the employment status of colleagues and the methods and types of contracts. These data will be crucial in reference to the reorganization of the hospital network and territorial services to guarantee the LEAs (outpatient and rehabilitation LEAs) considering the low incidence of speech therapists working in the public sector compared to the total number of professionals active in the Region. The questionnaire used for the survey allowed us to highlight strengths and weaknesses related to the speech therapist profession. The possibility of comparing data and observing their evolution over time provides the possibility of highlighting the critical issues that have emerged and planning future actions for better governance of the profession.

It seems necessary to start a reflection with the institutions to redefine the organic plans, where the speech therapist is foreseen but not yet present. The current requirement, considering the total number of Sicilians (4,968,410) per 100,000 inhabitants is 20.56 when instead the European figure is 38. The need to employ a greater number of speech therapists in the Regional Health Service appears evident.

It is appropriate not only to maintain the number of speech therapists trained in Sicilian universities, which already cover almost all the professionals in the region, but to regulate the number of accesses to degree courses in relation to the data that has emerged. Only 12% of Sicilian speech therapists work as public employees on a fixed-term or permanent basis, a figure slightly higher than that of 2020, while the majority of colleagues, 88% of speech therapists, work in affiliated private centers or as freelancers.

There remains a strong imbalance in employment towards the private sector and this data must also be monitored in relation to the need for speech therapists in the regional health service and for the elimination of waiting lists. The data that emerges will be an opportunity for reflection and consequent actions to be taken in appropriate specific interest groups, which can pay attention to these areas, also at the level of political governance.

Finally, this work once again presents itself as a pilot project to be shared with other regions, with the hope of initiating constructive comparisons and creating a corpus of regional and national data, useful for planning strategic actions to protect the health needs of citizens and for greater protection of speech therapist healthcare professionals, regardless of the working contexts of reference.

It is hoped that this census with the same methods can lead to frequent and constant monitoring over time of the state of employment and satisfaction of Sicilian speech therapists, so that it can be used as a starting point for the management of the speech therapist profession in Sicily.

INTRODUCTION

After the experience from the Before edition of the Census of the Speech therapists from the region Sicily, the Commissions Of Register of the Orders TSRM e PSTRP they have deemed appropriate, to distance Of some year, repeat the investigation on state employment of the Speech therapists That they carry out there own activity professional in Sicily. Such Work And promoted from the Commission Of Register of the Speech therapists of the Order TSRM-PSTRP Of Palermo, there Which has found full And active participation And collaboration from part from the Commissions Of Regi-

ster of the Speech Therapists of the TSRM-PSTRP Orders throughout Sicily, i.e.: Board of Directors of the Speech Therapists of Catania, Caltanissetta-Agrigento, Enna, Messina, Ragusa, Syracuse And Trapani.

The Census he means present the data concerning to a reconnaissance And census of the Speech therapists in the Region Sicily For to represent How much emerged And do it object Of reasoning For a improve governance from the profession, with there purpose Of to boot a investigation statistics about there position working And there training of the Speech therapists Sicilians.

There reconnaissance allows Of compare the data

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current with those dating back at the Before edition of the Census of the Speech therapists Region Sicily (year 2020) with there purpose Of improve there governance from the profession.

This style Of Work And state learned in the years Of constant I commit born with the Associations Regional, That they have Then founded there Federation Speech therapists Italians (FLI), recognized subsequently from the our Government as Association Mostly Representative of the Speech therapists. With the Resolution of 23 September 2021, FLI obtained recognition in the list of the Ministry of Health as a Technical Scientific Association. The federative organization has made it possible to make visible what is most current in the national professional panorama and at the same time allow the growth and achievement of many objectives.

Goals main Of such detection I am:

- Collect data And information about there situation working of the professionals That they operate in various provinces Sicilian For to acquire The given employment;

- Detect the conditions contractual;

- Have The given on number speech therapists in relationship to the number of the inhabitants;

- Test the levels Of training active on the territory and extraterritorial;

- Detect there training post -graduate And areas Of specialization;

- Individuate there need Of formations specifications And on which areas;

- Compare evolution of the data respect at the Before edition of the Census (year 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was carried out via an online questionnaire in the period between April And July 2023. THE responders I am States 602 Speech therapists subscribers to Albi of the Order TSRM PSTRP from the Sicily, equal to 50% of the total number of those registered in the Registers (602 of 1196), with inhomogeneity Between the various Albums: Yes And detected a marked participation in someone Provinces, as Ragusa (89%), Agrigento - Caltanissetta (72%) and Enna (70%); vice versa others provinces they have Done to record a minor number Of answers, as Catania (27%) And Messina (36%).

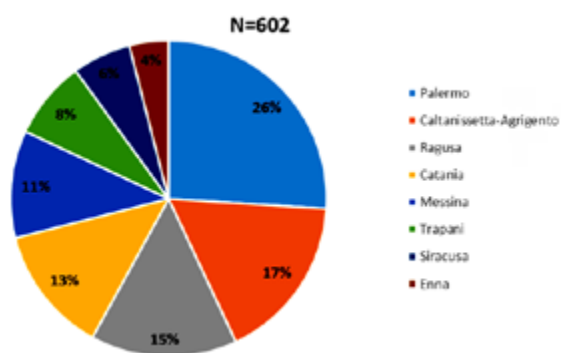
There was a lower participation in the survey compared to the 2020 data (minus 15%). Such flexion physiological And linked to the fact that The Census of 2020 And was conducted in a particularly favorable moment for technology and remote working, that is Pandemic from SARS-CoV-2, moment historical in which many professionals they have had to find mode Of Work alternatives And to distance, exploiting daily basis laptops And smart phone .

From here it makes it easier for you to fill out an online questionnaire which you then have permit Of to record a participation total even to the 75% of the subscribers to Albi, with peaks of the 90% For someone provinces.

There detection And the following analyses I am

stay possible Thank you at the collaboration from the Board of Directors Sicilian and in particular of the referents provincial:

- Board of Directors Agrigento – Caltanissetta Dr. Veronica Torregrossa
- Board of Directors Catania Dr. Carla di Francesco
- Board of Directors Enna Dr. Paola Arena
- Board of Directors Messina Dr. Maria Grazia Fugazzotto
- Board of Directors Palermo Dr. Federico La Tona
- Board of Directors Ragusa Dr. Adriana Criscione
- Board of Directors Syracuse Dr. Maria Cristina Emiliani
- Board of Directors Trapani Dr. Monica Messina



Graph 1 – Distribution of responders by province

ORDERS TSRM-PSTRP SICILY	N° RESPONDERS/ N°SUBSCRIBERS
PALERMO	156/287 (54%)
CATANIA	77/285 (27%)
AGRIGENTO - CALTANISSETTA	103/142 (72%)
MESSINA	65/180 (36%)
TRAPANI	49/112 (44%)
SIRACUSA	39/62 (63%)
RAGUSA	78/89 (89%)
ENNA	27/39 (70%)

Table 1 – Distribution of responders by province

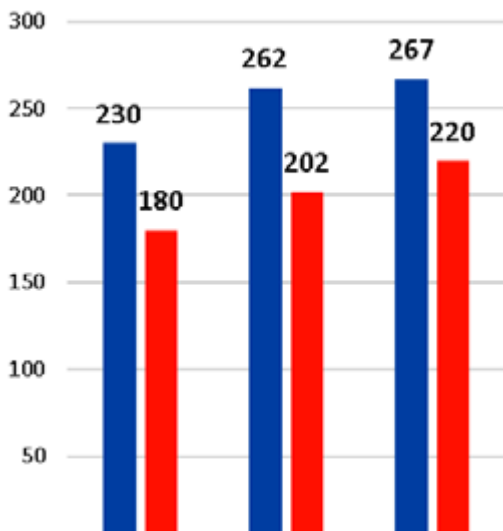


Table 2 - Distribution of length of service

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

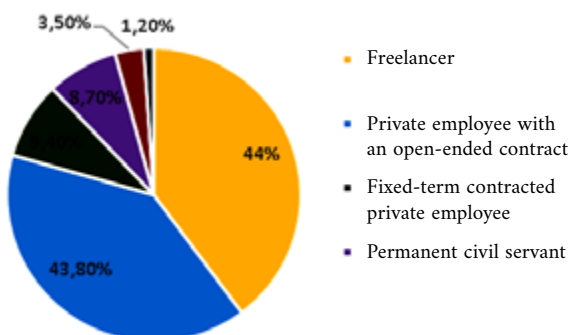
Data Analysis

Consider the Three bands Of age taken in consideration, there is a homogeneous distribution of professionals in our territory.

Chart 2 shows how 83% of the speech therapists Sicilians registered And busy, against The 98% of the 2020. Furthermore, approximately 17% of the speech therapists surveyed, declares himself available to new job offers, given in line with that highlighted In the 2020 (19%). 9% of speech therapists works as a fixed-term public employee (given superimposable to that of the 2020). On the other hand, the percentages are balanced with reference to freelancers and employees of private affiliated centers (open-ended).

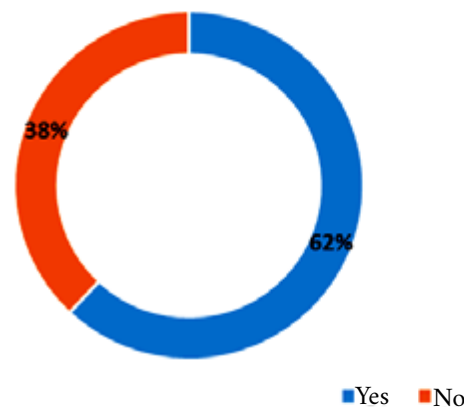
There was an increase of 3% compared to 2020 for speech therapists employed in the public sector, included the workers to time determined. However, only The 12% of the subjects work In the public while the remaining 88% of colleagues work in affiliated private centers or in the freelancer.

Such given further to make evident a strong employment imbalance to the private And from to monitor in consideration of the requirement of the speech therapists In the service healthcare regional and from the lists of wait.



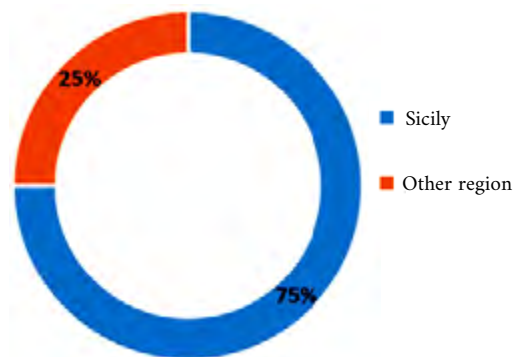
Graph 2 - The employment status: forms of work 2023

Graph 3 highlight That many professionals they succeed to carry out there own activity working In the territory Of residence, Like this as In the 2020 (55%).



Graph 3 - Place of employment in the same municipality of residence

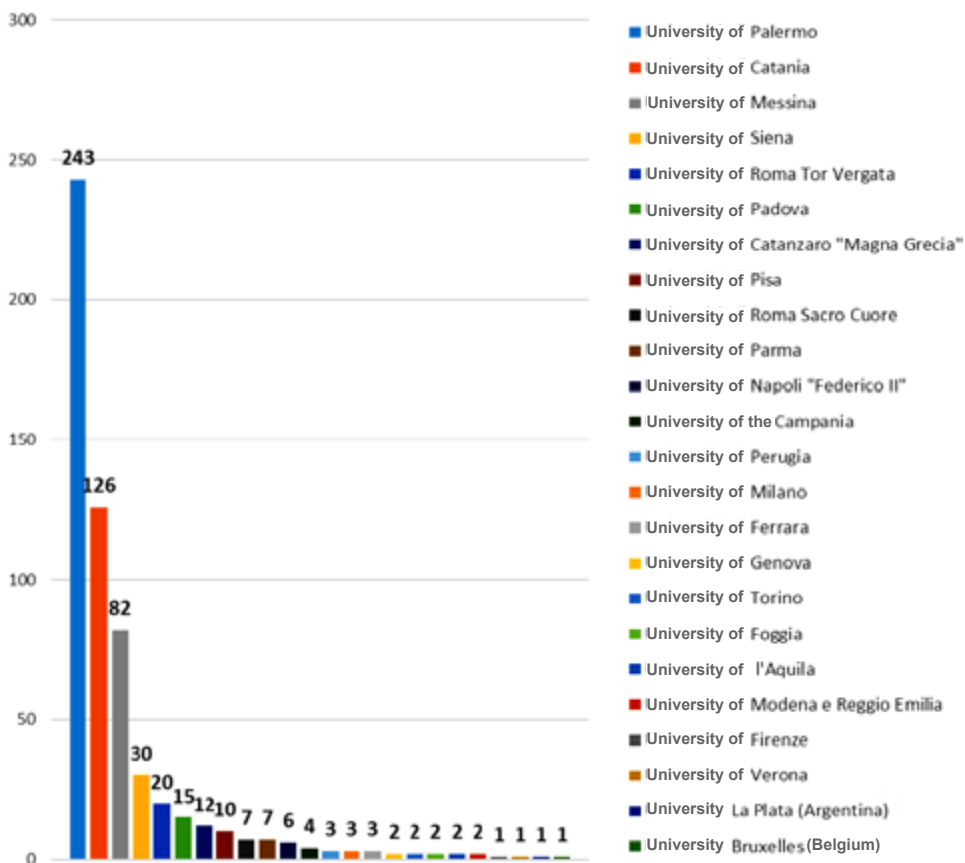
Graph 4 finds that 451 SLPs (75%) achieved there Degree in Speech therapy in one of the Three Courses Of Degree Active in the universities from the our region (Palermo - Messina - Catania), given important For the economy from the our region And For The contribution given at families And to the young That can to be facilitated In the achievement Of a title professional expendable in times very short; Indeed, The placement employment it is very favorable.



Graph 4 - University of origin

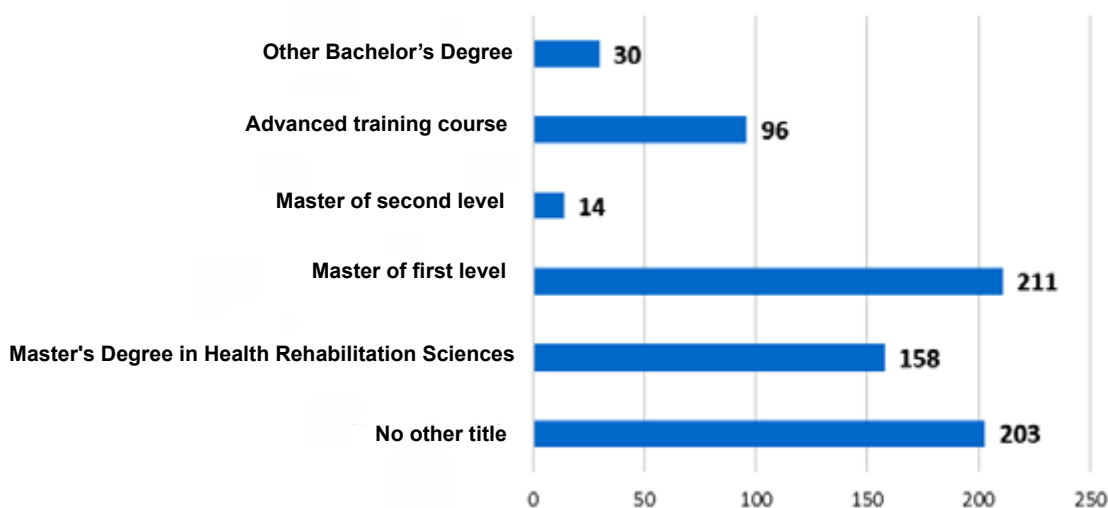
Graph 6 shows how 158 speech therapists surveyed (28%) they have achieved there Degree Master's degree in "Rehabilitation Sciences of Health Professions, While 211 (33%) they have achieved a master's degree by I level. These represent relevant data, in How much graduation masterful turns out to be a title important so long as offers a more wide training overview on reality organizational from the professions healthcare, allowing Of to acquire important knowledge And skills concerning The sector of the organization corporate, of the management And of the organization from the profession, offering outlets employment within the scope from the Management is clinic That teaching. Few, but in increase respect to the 2020, I am Still the Speech therapists who have obtained a II level

UNIVERSITY OF ORIGIN



Graph 5 - University of origin

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS



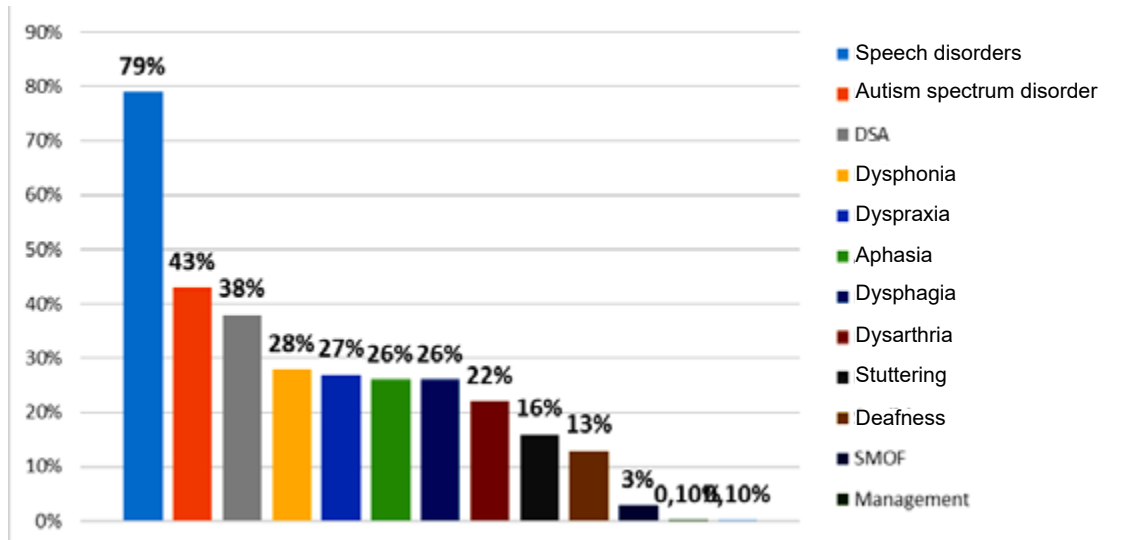
Graph 6 - Other Educational Qualification

master's degree: only 14 (just 2%). From consider That In the our scope disciplinary I am Still few the master's degree available so long as in the our Region Not I am Still present. In the end, 203 Speech therapists (35%) not they have achieved any title beyond there degree in Speech therapy.

The analysis highlights how the majority of speech therapists surveyed are specialized in the treatment of language disorders (79%), just as a good portion

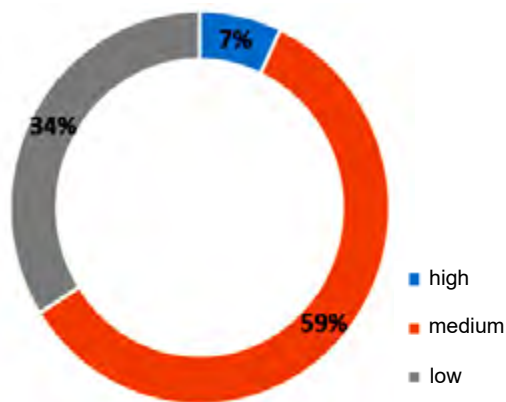
are specialized In the treatment of the I disturb of the spectrum autistic (43%). In relation at the transition epidemiological And demographic of the our Village Yes highlight the emergence of specializations in the neurological and neurodegenerative clinical field (see increase in the number of patients with aphasia and dysphagia) and a growing number of professionals is expected to increasingly deal with these disorders in different working contexts

SPECIALIZATION IN SPEECH THERAPY



Graph 7 - Specialization in speech therapy area

(e.g. RSA, ADI). THE data sign in Not highlight big discrepancies respect to the data of the 2020. Compared to the degree of satisfaction with the training offer, as shown in Graph 8, the greatest part of the registered professionals is on average satisfied. 34% of the speech therapists surveyed express a low degree of satisfaction on which it would be appropriate to investigate to the end Of improve the offer formative on the territory And answer in manner appropriate to the needs trai-



Graph 8 - Degree of satisfaction with the training offer

ning. The percentages in merit I am in line with the data of the 2020. In relation to the need formative detected, Yes they will orient the future choices in This scope. This need also shows us how much is intercepted in the daily clinic by professionals That they feel The need Of maintain updated there They training with great sense ethical And ethical.

CONCLUSIONS

The census of Sicilian speech therapists has proven to be a very useful tool for identifying important information and data regarding the employment status of colleagues and the methods and types of

contracts. These data will be crucial in reference to the reorganization of the hospital network and territorial services to guarantee the LEAs (outpatient and rehabilitation LEAs) considering the low incidence of speech therapists working in the public sector compared to the total number of professionals active in the Region. The questionnaire used for the survey allowed us to highlight strengths and weaknesses related to the speech therapist profession.

The possibility of comparing data and observing their evolution over time provides the possibility of highlighting the critical issues that have emerged and planning future actions for better governance of the profession.

The comparison with the 2020 data has provided important food for thought regarding the future prospects of Sicilian speech therapists. The data that emerged will once again be made available to the institutions, in reference to citizens' needs (health needs) and to report the need for missing services or those that are entrusted to private individuals.

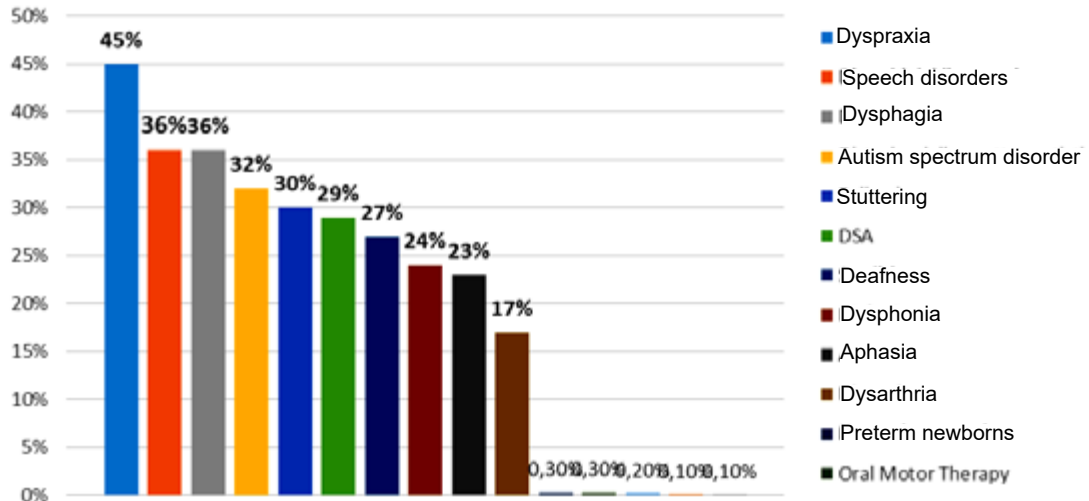
It seems necessary to start a reflection with the institutions to redefine the organic plans, where the speech therapist is foreseen but not yet present.

The current requirement, considering the total number of Sicilians (4,968,410) per 100,000 inhabitants is 20.56 when instead the European figure is 38.

It therefore appears evident that there is a need to employ a greater number of speech therapists in the Regional Health Service, a need confirmed by the long waiting lists in public and private services, which in recent years have seen an exponential growth in the demand for health over the entire period of life of the citizen.

It is appropriate not only to maintain the number of speech therapists trained in Sicilian universities, which already cover almost all the professionals in the region, but to regulate the number of accesses to degree courses in relation to the data that has emerged. Only 12% of Sicilian speech thera-

TRAINING REQUIRED



Graph 9 - Training required

pists work as public employees on a fixed-term or permanent basis, a figure slightly higher than that of 2020, while the majority of colleagues, 88% of speech therapists, work in affiliated private centers or as freelancers.

It would also be appropriate to evaluate the level of job satisfaction of speech therapists, to understand which type of job is most satisfying and what factors influence this opinion.

There remains a strong imbalance in employment towards the private sector and this data must also be monitored in relation to the need for speech therapists in the regional health service and for the elimination of waiting lists.

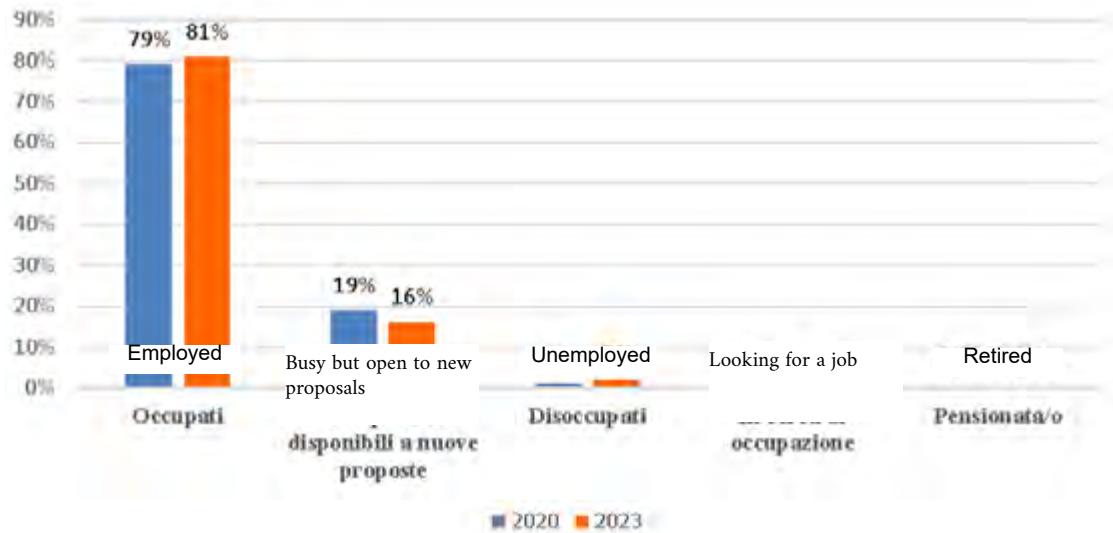
The information relating to satisfaction and training demand that has been acquired makes us understand that it is important to activate constant monitoring of the needs of professionals. The aspects relating to speech therapy specialization that professionals have developed and indicated mainly show language disorder, followed by autism

spectrum disorder and specific learning disorders. The data that emerges will be an opportunity for reflection and consequent actions to be taken in appropriate specific interest groups, which can pay attention to these areas, also at the level of political governance .

Finally, this work once again presents itself as a pilot project to be shared with other regions, with the hope of initiating constructive comparisons and creating a corpus of regional and national data, useful for planning strategic actions to protect the health needs of citizens and for greater protection of speech therapist healthcare professionals, regardless of the working contexts of reference.

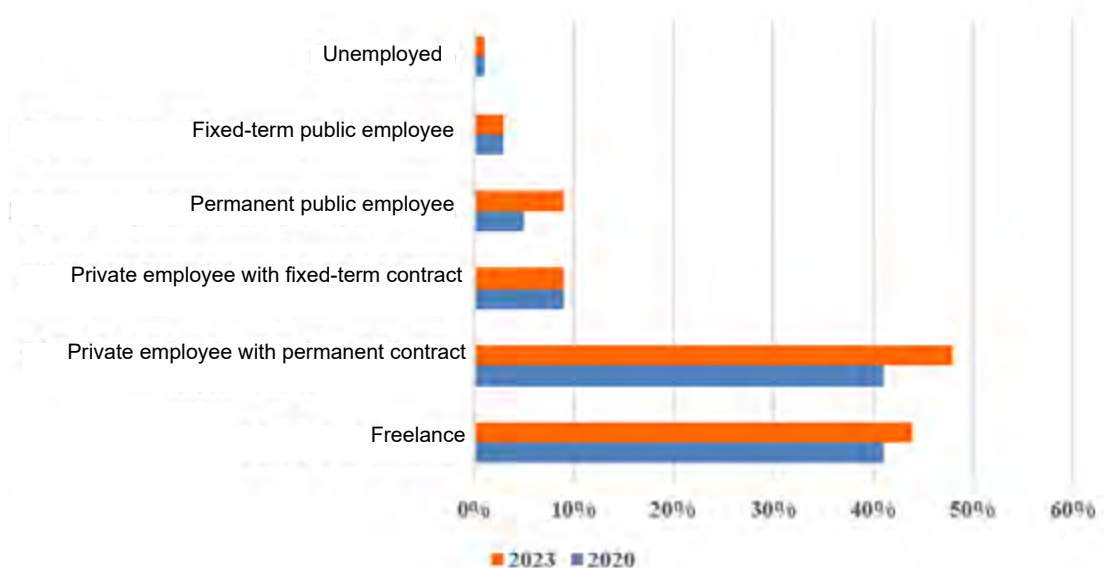
It is hoped that this census with the same methods can lead to frequent and constant monitoring over time of the state of employment and satisfaction of Sicilian speech therapists, so that it can be used as a starting point for the management of the speech therapist profession in Sicily.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS COMPARISON 2020-2023



Graph 10 - Employment status comparison 2020-2023

COMPARISON FORMS OF WORK 2020-2023



Graph 11 - Comparison forms of work 2020-2023

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