

**GUIDED TOURS FOR PROMOTING A SENSE OF BELONGING AND HEALTH AMONG WORKERS IN LABORATORY ENVIRONMENTS**

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**Abstract**

Parasitic and infectious-contagious diseases are a significant public health challenge; their effective control requires coordinated actions in therapy, sanitation, and education. Thus, university extension programs serve as a valuable tool for supporting the learning process of the population. The aim of this study was to promote the visit and exchange of information for the cleaning staff of the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU) to the practical Parasitology and Microbiology laboratory classrooms. Guided visits were conducted, and participants had access to the parasitology collection, microbiology materials, as well as information on various diseases and prevention methods. At the end of each visit, a discussion was held regarding the participants' perspectives on the topics presented. The visits were carried out in two sessions, with a total of 24 participants, who observed under the microscope slides of parasites (*A. lumbricoides*, *E. vermicularis*, *T. solium*, *T. saginata*, *S. mansoni*, *T. cruzi*, *G. duodenalis*, *P. humanus*, *P. pubis*, *R. sanguineus*, *T. penetrans*, and *A. aegypti*), as well as macroscopic specimens of *T. infestans* and flies; bacteria (Gram-positive: *S. aureus*; Gram-negative: *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp.); and fungi (filamentous: *Aspergillus* spp., and yeasts: *C. albicans*). Parasites in formaldehyde and explanatory boards were also observed, and there was interaction with 3D models. Practical activities included hand hygiene techniques, disinfection and cleaning procedures, tooth brushing techniques, and the use of hand sanitizer and sodium hypochlorite. The responses from participants during the discussion revealed that many were curious about the activities in the labs and had numerous questions regarding prevention methods for the various agents presented. We concluded that working with a segment of the population often neglected in educational efforts enables the democratization of access to discussions on these topics, leading to societal changes.

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