

Contemporary challenges of worker's health

The Thematic edition entitled “Challenges Worker's Health(WH) at the Contemporary World,” from *Ciência e Saúde Coletiva* (RCSC) journal, published here, is the product from a process of collective work and collaborative production realized for many participants, which ended at an important and differentiated compendium manuscripts, an actual picture of the reflexions, studies and interventions made by WH in Brazil.

Actually, the Brazil is experiencing an unprecedented health, political and humanitarian crisis. The new coronavirus pandemic (Sars-CoV-2) has killed 604,000 people and infected 21.7 million people thus far. These numbers illustrate, among other aspects, the drama of the social issue, notably the intensification of income concentration and resulting inequalities. Furthermore, the crisis scenario affected the labor market in an overwhelming way, with loss of rights and setbacks in the historical achievements of the working class. Thus, the classic forms of social protection, such as pensions and public welfare, have been compromised, and the number of occupational accidents and illnesses has risen. Old and new modes of labor exploitation have returned, with renewed vigor, through the increase in working hours, the precariousness of work and structural unemployment, which are the hallmarks of the strategies of domination of the working class.

Added to this disheartening scenario, there are ultra-right and anti-science conservative governments that work towards the increase of class privileges. Although not exactly new, these are strategies that accentuate the forms of exploitation and oppression of race and gender, which contribute to the deplorable increase in violence, hunger, and the decline in the quality of living and health conditions of the working class¹. On the other hand, workers develop new modes of action and creative individual and collective strategies to circumvent the adversities of work and counteract the offensives of capital.

Specifically with regard to the relationship between work, health and the environment, it is understood that work is permanently associated with the upsurge of deleterious effects to health, which can cause illnesses, curtail professional life and lead to the death of workers when performed in inadequate environmental conditions. All work processes involve situations of risk, which impinge directly or indirectly in different physiological, psychological and emotional ways on the worker². It is also important to consider that, at the structural level, environmental conditions are modified according to the interests and convenience of capital generation, with impacts on health and the exacerbation of human and social vulnerabilities. From this perspective, there are no truly natural disasters, considering that nature, life, and human action are metabolically interlinked³.

At last with respect to the editing process of this publication, the leading role of the Center of Study of the Worker's Health and Human Ecology (CESTEH/ENSP/Fiocruz) deserves to be highlighted, as it enabled the dialogue with institutions and social movements that make up the large WH network in the country. Thus, of the 243 articles received, 21 selected papers stood out for merit, quality, and thematic topicality, organized around the following thematic areas: unemployment, informal labor, and workers' health; training and communication in Worker's Health; precariousness and intensification of work; mental health and work; surveillance in Worker's Health, chemical substances in industry, and the health of workers and populations.

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