Abstract

Introduction: World Health Organization proposed for the years 2006 to 2016 a ten year action plan to address occupational issues of health workforce. One of the reasons for this is the fact that health workers are systematically becoming ill. Is this sickening process inherent to health work? This article discusses this issue. Objectives: 1) To present the municipal health managers’ conception on the relationship between occupational health and health work. 2) Analyze how these managers explain health workers’ sickening phenomenon. Method: Data was collected between May and July 2011, in a municipality of Espírito Santo State, Brazil. We used the Discourse of the Collective Subject method. Results: The municipal health system managers stated they did not have numerical data to explain the studied situation. They presented two different explanations: one concerning work organization and one related to workers’ personal issues. They suggested workers’ sickening has gradually been viewed as a natural process. Conclusion: Several singularities of health work related to management strategies or to the workers’ characteristics seem to hinder the relational aspect of work, which leads to sickening.

Keywords

Health work, worker’s health, health staff management.