The Crisis of Domination in the System of Public Health

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Objectives: To examine the weaknesses of the mechanisms of domination/control of public health institutions in Brazil over their workers and the population as much as to describe their forms of coercion.

Methodology: Descriptive analytical.

Results: The author identifies four mechanisms of domination/control of public health institutions, in accordance with the national and regional press in Brazil: the centralization of power, repression, political action and social control. According to her analysis, the centralization of power in the health sector promotes the imposition of public policy and the institutionalization of inefficient health services, creating user dissatisfaction and resistance of workers to the direction from authorities or health administrators.

Then, the author identifies two strategies of repression used by health administrators to deal with the dissent of workers: political persecution and disciplinary practices in the form of punishment or restraint; these coercive practices are usually the response to allegations made by the workers of the misuse of the public health structure.

As for political action, private companies exert indirect control on the sector through the placement of their representatives in political posts with executive power, who, on the one hand, encourage private financing of health care to the detriment of providing public health services and, on the other hand, favor subsidies to balance private sector losses.

Finally, the author notes that there remains a need for social control in the sector, which is now exercised by the Municipal and Local Health Councils in the Single Health System. This type of control, however, is also coercive, replacing the participation of individuals freely associated with a group of men governed by political forces.

Conclusions: For the author, the public health system in Brazil has an inefficient structure, not committed to the wellbeing of society. The author concludes that the mechanisms of domination of the health institutions favor repressive measures of patients and health workers. Consider that social control should include a type of political power that favors collective interests.