

Analysis of the Work Process and Suicide in the Largest Tobacco Production Regions in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Brazil is the second largest producer and largest exporter of tobacco. However, even though it has a significant influence on Brazil's trade balance, the real economic benefits of tobacco production are of concern for health. There is an annual expenditure of R\$ 56.9 billion in medical expenses and loss of productivity, while the collection of taxes totals R \$ 13 billion, which only covers 23% of the expenses with the epidemic. Equally worrisome is the health of tobacco producers, who in the country amount to almost 200 thousand family farmers, carrying out a type of work that causes great damages to health, being subject matter in article 18 of the Framework Convention. This scenario motivated a qualitative research, aiming to evaluate the work process and identify elements that can cause damage to physical and mental health in farmers, even with suicide outcome.

METHODS

The study was organized in two stages: a) analysis of the work process in the producing regions in the south and northeast of the country, based on information from studies published since 1990; b) analysis of the occurrence of suicide cases recorded in official databases in 52 municipalities in the south and northeast of the country, from 2004 to 2013.

RESULTS

The analysis of the work process showed that the productive cycle can take 14 months absorbing until 12h / day. Different tobacco require different working modalities in sheds or open air. Being a plant susceptible to pests, there is intense use of pesticides and toxicities, concentrating on the leaves with nicotine that will be manipulated and stored by the farmer. The price paid at the end may not cover investments, including industry loans, resulting in the accumulation of debts with the company and risk your property where work and reside. This scenario of difficulties can lead to the mental illness of these workers. In the analysis of the databases, it was possible to verify the suicide register in all tobacco producing municipalities, with the highest number of suicides in the regions with the highest production in the south - in the municipality of Santa Cruz do Sul in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS) - and municipality of Arapiraca in the state of Alagoas (AL) located in the northeast of the country.



CONCLUSION

These results show that the many stages in the work process and the aggressors to physical and mental health point to the need to reconsider the real benefits to the country's economy.