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Cultural issues on alcohol addiction

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An innovative study conducted at the Center for Chemical Dependency of the Brazilian Navy, through an ethnographic study and participant observation, examined the influence of this institution in the construction of patients' alcoholism. Cross-cultural issues must be taken into account in order to understand better certain drinking patterns in the workplace. For that, it is believed that a socio-anthropological eye on alcoholism was relevant, since it unveiled one of the main findings of this research: the alcoholic *habitus*. It refers to internalized patterns of behaviors, attitudes, and thoughts associated to ways of drinking, mainly collectively. Drinking on board is a learned naval tradition, disseminated by beliefs and myths in favor of alcoholic beverages during the working journey. The results motivate the application of protective procedures on behalf of the servicemen and the organization.

Keywords: qualitative research; researcher-subject relations; alcoholism.

Biography

Elizabeth Halpern is a Psychologist and a Frigate-Commander of the Brazilian Navy, a specialist in Medical Psychology, a Master in Collective Health, and a PhD in Mental Health. She dedicated 28 years in the Brazilian Navy hospitals and outpatient clinics, working as a chief and therapist, from prevention to rehabilitation, giving lectures and courses to military personnel, assisting families, couples, adolescents, and children, in groups and individually. As the Chief of the Center for Chemical Dependency during the last decade, she dedicated her practice towards addiction, and published 19 articles related to drinking practices in the workplace. Presently, she is the Chief of the Health Department of the Central Navy Hospital in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

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