The safety and health of healthcare workers is often addressed in publications on public health, and more particularly within the field of workers’ health. Brazilian Journal of Occupational Medicine (Revista Brasileira de Medicina do Trabalho — RBMT) has been a frequent means of divulgation of the scientific production on this subject.

Data from a World Health Organization and Global Health Workforce Alliance report indicate that there were almost 1.9 million accredited health care professionals in Brazil in 2013. The aim of the report was to discuss access to health care as one of the millennium global challenges. Among the crucial points to attain the goal of full coverage by 2030, the report points to the need to educate and train human resources to prepare them and encourage their engagement in this project. Another important point is the development of a workforce trained and motivated to perform tasks related with health care delivery. However, such goals will hardly be met without investment in the promotion of the health and safety at work of this population of workers for them to maintain a permanent state of biopsychosocial well-being.

RBMT volume 15 issue 3 includes a set of articles which sought to discuss the actual situation of several categories of professionals involved in health care delivery. Silva and colleagues reviewed the occupational hazards related to nursing work in the intensive care unit, and Dzhodzhua and colleagues addressed visual fatigue among ophthalmologists. Occupational exposure to biological agents is the subject of a survey of hospital data in Lima, Kawanami and Romeiro’s contribution. This subject furthered triggered a discussion on the management of the investigation of sharps injuries by Lima and colleagues. It is further addressed by Gomes and Caldas based on data collected from the System of Information for Notifiable Diseases (Sistema de Informação sobre Agravos de Notificação — SINAN) on Work Accidents Involving Exposure to Biological Materials (Acidentes de Trabalho com Exposição a Material Biológico — ATEMB).

Since a part of the healthcare workforce are women of reproductive age, the review performed by Pustiglione on the impact of occupational risk agents on pregnancy, the conceptus and the infant is uninterruptedly necessary, especially in times of flexibilization of the labor rights.

Echoing the editorial published by Dussault, it is worth reflecting on the practical applicability of the knowledge being produced based on discussions on the health-work-disease process among health care professionals. It would be recommendable for investigators to dare to focus beyond descriptions of familiar characteristics and surveys of easy-to-access data. Encouragement of projects or actions to improve work environments and contexts will more effectively contribute to good practices in care delivery and to preserve the health of health care workers.

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REFERENCES
