

Will we learn the lessons of Mariana and Brumadinho?

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*Minas is a mountainous word.
Carlos Drummond de Andrade*

In November, the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais will host the 8th Brazilian Symposium on Health Surveillance - Simbravisa -, which will bring together workers, managers and researchers to discuss their wide scope of action in health protection.

The unacceptable human and environmental disasters that have occurred over the last three years in Minas Gerais, in the cities of Mariana and Brumadinho, caused by Vale mining business, have much to teach to health surveillance, politicians and all those who are willing to learn from the damage.

Minas Gerais is grieving. The word *minas* (mines), as written above by Drummond, reveal the ore of its mountains, its wealth, gold, development, economy. However, the word *gerais* (general) has another dimension that includes its gaps of dignity, healthcare, protection and conservation. It includes vulnerable municipalities, exposed populations and adverse survival conditions.

The mining activity has a benefit/risk binomial that is also common to the health surveillance work process and its various objects of care. This process has witnessed countless health tragedies, some of which are widely known, others are still concealed in the daily routine of this type of work. Cesium in Goiás. Counterfeit medicines like Celobar. Contaminated prostheses. Pesticides and their damage.

Health tragedies have shown an imbalance in this binomial: looser rules and eagerness for profit have hindered the safety of products and services. This was the case of Vale, its dams, and what they call mud, but that in reality is toxic waste filled with metals like mercury, lead, arsenic and others.

Considering the political and social challenges of Brazil, the violation of human rights, the growth of impudence and ethical deviance, the tyranny of the media and a worldwide scenario of liquidity, it is essential to stress that state regulation must be prioritized and respected in its most important principle: the protection of life.

The idea that has been advocated by many in favor of deregulation, minimal state, self-regulation, must be discussed in the light of the crimes that occurred.

It is necessary that the regulation be designed beforehand, with the input from the society, information and transparency, aimed at human and environmental safety, collective principles and not focused on particular interests.

Thus, some questions stand out and add to others we already know.

In times like these, in the aftermath of another crime, how can we discuss self-regulation in Brazil? Could markets guarantee themselves?

Should we recall which health surveillance production chains can jeopardize a decent life and a sustainable environment?

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How many times have health tragedies shown us that greed and neglect cannot be above the collective interest?

What about other tragedies that remain concealed in the daily work of health surveillance involving its workers, political pressure, wrong registration and licensing processes?

With all the communication tools available today, why is society still unaware of their rights to safe products and services?

Will our traditional inspection model suffice to do the prevention needed on such diverse objects and such fast production times?

Is it not necessary for health regulation, education, research and monitoring, management and workers, to be even bolder?

The weight of what happened in Minas Gerais brings weight to this new year's editorial. Ironically, once and again the voice of the poet echoes in the mountains: "What now, José?"

However, to address these issues that are both urgent and old, we must make some unavoidable changes. We have to go to root of the problems with the efforts of workers, researchers and managers to prevent the disruption of these health protection actions.

To learn the lessons of Mariana and Brumadinho is to act with the utmost competence in the primary mission of health surveillance and to do more than expected in work, science and life.

The 8th Simbravisa in Minas Gerais is, more than ever, necessary, timely and symbolic.