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The use of psychopharmacy as a response to the school complaints

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The Education Secretary in the city of Petrópolis, a city located in the country of Rio de Janeiro state, in Brazil, contains a Counseling of School Psychology (CSP) which receives referrals about students with school complaint. By school complaint we understand “the difficulties which refer to the schooling process of the child/student and generate referrals of psychological evaluation or individual service” (Oliveira, Bragagnolo & Souza, 2014, p. 06). We made a documental research analyzing these referrals, produced in 2013 and 2015, aiming the identification of the diagnoses and uses of psychotropic drugs in children by behavioural with the goal of investigating a possible appropriation of medicalizing speeches by the educational institutions and, therefore, a drug therapy treatment as an answer to school complaints. The analysis of the referrals revealed that from 254 children, 65 received diagnoses, being the most frequent the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (27) and the Oppositional Defiant Disorder (12). Among these, 6 children were diagnosed with both disorders. Independent of medical diagnoses, 100 children use psychotropic drugs, considering that among the 144 students who were referred but did not use any psychotropic drug, 41 were referred to specialists with this goal. The medications with a higher number of prescriptions were Carbamazepine, Ritalin and Risperidone. Treating school complaints with diagnoses and medications that blame children and their families is to neglect a precarious educational system and the social indicators which promote inequality and violence. It is a Psychology’s duty to analyze and question which educational practices Psychology itself is cooperating when the professionals receive referrals that silence these realities and reproduce a biologizing model, which has in the medical intervention a correcting possibility for those who uncover the school as a sickness promoting institution.

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