The work-family articulation experienced by Portuguese women managers: a source of occupational stress?

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Actually men and women face the challenge of balance work and family domains in a satisfactory manner, which has been difficult due to several changes, occurred in families and to increasing demands in work domain [1,2]. Management is the professional sector that is more likely to induce stress associated to work-family articulation in their professional's cause of the demands and characteristics of this activity [3].

The main goal of this study is to understand how woman managers live work-family articulation, which is translated into the following research questions: (1) Is management perceived as a stressful function? (2) Is work-family articulation perceived as an occupational stressor by female managers? If so, which management characteristics are considered by these female mangers which influence positively and negatively this articulation? (3) What models of work-family articulation are used by female managers and what strategies they use to manage these domains? We have developed a descriptive, exploratory study with a qualitative approach [4] using the method of multiple cases [5] The semi-structured interview was the technique used for collecting information and the content analysis the technique to analyze data from interviews [6]. The results of this study show that these female managers perceived their function as stressful and that work-family articulation is understood as a source of occupational stress in which workload is the characteristic that has more influence on that articulation. Female managers live their relationship between these two domains through spillover and use the family support as a main strategy to manage the family with the professional sphere. We propose studies with a larger number of cases for a deeper analyze about the work-family articulation, both in female and male managers in Portugal. We also suggest the development of studies about the real effectiveness of "family friendly" policies of human resources management.

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