Health issues and difficulties for women in small-scale fishing activity in cities from the North Fluminense in Brazil

HELLEBRANDT, Luceni
MARTINEZ, Silvia Alicia
[UENF - BRAZIL]
The study “Women in fishing: map of socio-environmental conflicts in cities from the North Fluminense and Baixadas Litorâneas” applies a gender lens in the fishing communities of the region so that the people investigated are, especially, women who work in small-scale fishing activity.
"The implementation of the Women in Fisheries Project is a compensatory measure established by the Term of Conduct Adjustment of responsibility of the company Chevron, conducted by the Federal Public Ministry - MPF / RJ, with implementation of the Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity - Funbio."
When the health issue is addressed, we can see:

1) there is no specific health program to approach and/or guide regarding fishing work-related diseases;

2) the women’s difficulty in accessing health-related social security benefits, once there is a deep issue of invisibility and, consequently, a non-recognition of women in Brazilian fisheries legislation.
Health issue in Brazilian fishing activity - Regulation:

- for industrial fishery there are 2 Regulations Norms (NR 30/2002 and NR 31/2005)

- for artisanal (small-scale) there are no specific regulation or program - due to the informal work relations (Pena et al, 2013)
When we look for women in fishing activity

- difficulty for legal recognition as fisher/fisher worker;

Brazilian Fishery Law - 11.959/2009 - classify fishery activities where women are most present - pre and post-harvest activity - as support fishery actives, not as fisher/fisher worker, thus without the right for access unemployment benefits Law 10.779/2003.
When we look for women in fishing activity

- without legal recognition as fisher/fisher worker, they cannot access their rights to spend some time away from work (like health insurance or health-related social security benefits).
Health is an important issue, always addressed at artisanal fisheries meetings...

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Niteroi / RJ
(2012)
source: personal archive
"The implementation of the Women in Fisheries Project is a compensatory measure established by the Term of Conduct Adjustment of responsibility of the company Chevron, conducted by the Federal Public Ministry - MPF / RJ, with implementation of the Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity - Funbio."

Pelotas / RS
(2013)

source: personal archive
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São João da Barra / RJ (2017)

source: Mulheres na Pesca - archive
“The implementation of the Women in Fisheries Project is a compensatory measure established by the Term of Conduct Adjustment of responsibility of the company Chevron, conducted by the Federal Public Ministry - MPF / RJ, with implementation of the Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity - Funbio”.
Some health issues that appear in our interviews:

- back pain, arm pain (Repetitive Strain Injury)... usually solved with a medicine or a injection for pain:

“it’s just a pain...we took a pill or a shot if it is too much pain, and back to work”. (all women interviewed)
Some health issues that appear in our interviews:

- skin problems due to the sun - medical advice to use sun protector, but:

“I have no money to take the bus to go to the city centre, how could I have money to buy a sunscreen? So I use long sleeve shirt, pants and a cap. Yes, it is hot, but the doctor said I could not get more sun”. (Geralda)
Some health issues that appear in our interviews:

- depression

“I was a little sad, I think I was worried... we think about a lot of things because you don’t know if you will have food for your child”. (Geralda)
Pain and Income

- no work, no income:
  → no paying bills (honor and shame);
  → no food for themselves or their child (food insecurity).
Illness

- to be ill is to stop working... so, they never became ill:

“The condition of work with chronic pain became a way of life”. (Pena et. al., 2011)

“‘Being ill’ means having new bills - less resources for house maintenance”. (Torres, 2016)
Recommendations (Pena et. al., 2013)

- Actions regarding health for workers in fishery communities;
- Ocupacional Medical Exames;
- Recognition of work-related disease.
Our recommendations

- Special training for health workers who are located at communities inside fishery communities (including special hours of attendance because of the natural time - tides and the housework shifts);
- Recognition of women as fish workers (lead them to be included in the National Security System, so some of their health issues can be addressed as related to the work on fishery).
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References

Thank you all!

luceni.hellebrandt@gmail.com

visit:
www.mulheresnapesca.uenf.br