Associations and dissociations: agents, discourses and controversies surrounding child hyperactivity

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Abstract

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) generates debates and confrontations among diverse social agents with different conceptions of normality, health, the individual and the social. In this scenario of controversy, parents have tried to improve the living conditions of their children through a number of models of social participation in health. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, fieldwork was carried out from 2013 to 2015 with the purpose of analyzing the universe of organizations regarding ADHD in Spain as well as other individual parenting initiatives with collective repercussions. The work seeks to identify the different relationships with expert knowledge in existence and the models of knowledge circulation that take place within those relationships, focusing on the way they configure discursive stances, establish collective dynamics, and develop actions. The disputed character of ADHD is evidenced in models more complex than that of the expert/layperson duality, as well as in new strategies of production and collectivization of knowledge facilitated by the Internet.