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ABSTRACT

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IS THERE BALANCE? MEXICAN MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS' WORK- LIFE EXPERIENCES
AND EMOTION MANAGEMENT ON THE U.S.- MEXICO BORDER

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The purpose of this study is to analyze medical doctors' work-life experiences and emotional management while practicing on the U.S.-Mexico. They have varying experiences and there is a constant shift of doctors attempting to manage work and personal lives; they must learn how to cope with the emotions that derive from their profession and the added pressures of practicing medicine with precaution due to the ongoing drug war in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Additionally, doctors on the border treat patients from both Mexico and the U.S. There are significant pressures and tensions involved in practicing medicine, and this is even more relevant when working on the border region. This is why this study is relevant and important.

Through qualitative methodology, I acquired the experiences of Mexican doctors on the Laredo-Nuevo Laredo border. Through a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, doctors described the difficulties they encountered when dealing with emotions at work, which gave deeper meaning to their statements.

Kidnappings, muggings, and extortions put significant constraints on doctors' occupational lives. Doctors modify their work practices, work schedules, and other daily routines, which intersect with their work and personal lives. Doctors also displayed resilience to continue practicing on the border regardless of the violence. Doctors in my study experience Clark's (2000) border theory, developed to fill in the gaps causing criticism of other work and family theories and work-life mechanisms (Clark, 2000). In addition to the border theory (Clark, 2000) the role theory (Kahn *et al.* 1964) also describes my participants' multiple role amalgamation. This theory proposes workers, in this case, doctors, are involved in varying life roles such as employee or family member amongst other roles that sometimes are incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).