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**Abstract Book**

## 670 - HUMOR AND DEATH WORK: THE SENSE OF HUMOR IN FUNERAL INDUSTRY OPERATORS

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### ABSTRACT

*Purpose:* Humor in work environments is a field of interest of the scientific community for several years. The purpose of this study is to investigate the presence of humor and its use to negotiate work experiences by workers in a professional context still under-researched as the funeral industry.

*Methods:* This two-years-project includes a qualitative research design and research tools used are semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Participants involved hold manager, supervisor and operator positions in four funeral industry sectors: morgue, cemetery, funeral services and crematorium services.

*Results:* Preliminary results show a consistent use of humor by the interviewed subjects. It emerges how workers use it primarily as a means of relieving stress and distancing from emotionally disturbing work experiences.

*Limitations:* The sample used is a convenience sample. The number of people reached is quite small so far due to the difficulty encountered by the researchers in identifying and reaching the subjects.

*Practical implications:* This study results may contribute to the use of humor in working contexts comprehension, especially in those contexts where workers are more exposed to high emotional experiences such as workers who daily deal with death and grief.

*Originality:* The peculiarity of this research concerns the studied work context, scarcely investigated from literature so far.

*Keywords:* Humor, funeral industry, death work, coping strategies.