

A Qualitative Study of Health-Related Beliefs and Practices among Vegetarians

Authors : Lorena Antonovici, Maria Nicoleta Turliuc

Abstract : The process of becoming a vegetarian involves changes in several life aspects, including health. Despite its relevance, however, little research has been carried out to analyze vegetarians' self-perceived health, and even less empirical attention has received in the Romanian population. This study aimed to assess health-related beliefs and practices among vegetarian adults in a Romanian sample. We have undertaken 20 semi-structured interviews (10 males, 10 females) based on a snowball sample with a mean age of 31 years. The interview guide was divided into three sections: causes of adopting the diet, general aspects (beliefs, practices, tensions, and conflicts) and consequences of adopting the diet (significant changes, positive aspects, and difficulties, physical and mental health). Additional anamnestic data were reported by means of a questionnaire. Data analyses were performed using Tropes text analysis software (v. 8.2) and SPSS software (v. 24.0.) Findings showed that most of the participants considered a vegetarian diet as a natural and healthy choice as opposed to meat-eating, which is not healthy, and its consumption should be moderated among omnivores. A higher proportion of participants (65%) had an average body mass index (BMI), and several women even assumed having certain affections that no longer occur after following a vegetarian diet. Moreover, participants admitted having better moods and mental health status, given their self-contentment with the dietary choice. Relatives were perceived as more skeptical about their practices than others, and especially women had this view. This study provides a valuable insight into health-related beliefs and practices and how a vegetarian diet might interact.

Keywords : beliefs, health, practices, vegetarians

Conference Title : ICPPNBCS 2020 : International Conference on Psychology, Psychiatry, Neurological, Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences

Conference Location : Helsinki, Finland

Conference Dates : July 17-18, 2020