

A Critical Analysis of the Current Concept of Healthy Eating and Its Impact on Food Traditions

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Abstract : Feeding is, and should be, pleasurable for living beings so they desire to nourish themselves while preserving the continuity of the species. Social rites usually revolve around the table and are closely linked to the cultural traditions of each region and social group. Since the beginning, food has been closely linked with the products each region provides, and, also, related to the respective seasons of production. With the globalization and facilities of modern life we are able to find an ever increasing variety of products at any time of the year on supermarket shelves. These lifestyle changes end up directly influencing food traditions. With the era of uncontrolled obesity caused by the dazzle with the large and varied supply of low-priced to ultra-processed industrial products now in the past, today we are living a time when people are putting aside the pleasure of eating to exclusively eat food dictated by the media as healthy. Recently the medicalization of food in our society has become so present in daily life that almost without realizing we make food choices conditioned to the studies of the properties of these foods. The fact that people are more attentive to their health is interesting. However, when this care becomes an obsessive disorder, which imposes itself on the pleasure of eating and extinguishes traditional customs, it becomes dangerous for our recognition as citizens belonging to a culture and society. This new way of living generates a rupture with the social environment of origin, possibly exposing old traditions to oblivion after two or three generations. Based on these facts, the presented study analyzes these social transformations that occur in our society that triggered the current medicalization of food. In order to clarify what is actually a healthy diet, this research proposes a critical analysis on the subject aiming to understand nutritional rationality and relate how it acts in the medicalization of food. A wide bibliographic review on the subject was carried out followed by an exploratory research in online (especially social) media, a relevant source in this context due to the perceived influence of such media in contemporary eating habits. Finally, this data was crossed, critically analyzing the current situation of the concept of healthy eating and medicalization of food. Throughout this research, it was noticed that people are increasingly seeking information about the nutritional properties of food, but instead of seeking the benefits of products that traditionally eat in their social environment, they incorporate external elements that often bring benefits similar to the food already consumed. This is because the access to information is directed by the media and exalts the exotic, since this arouses more interest of the population in general. Efforts must be made to clarify that traditional products are also healthy foods, rich in history, memory and tradition and cannot be replaced by a standardized diet little concerned with the construction of taste and pleasure, having a relationship with food as if it were a Medicinal product.

Keywords : food traditions, food transformations, healthy eating, medicalization of food

Conference Title : ICNFS 2017 : International Conference on Nutrition and Food Studies

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : August 07-08, 2017