The Collective Satisfaction of Food/Nutrition Needs and their Relationship with Health-Disease

J Rivera

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/lasm_cucs_en

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/lasm_cucs_en/10

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin American Social Medicine at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in English by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.
Objectives: To analyze and describe criteria related to collective satisfaction of the needs of food/nutrition, and discuss its relationship to the health and disease processes.

Methodology: Descriptive analytical.

Results: The author describes three areas of discussion and assertions about collective satisfaction of the needs of food/nutrition: a) the social determination of collective satisfaction of hunger depends on the evolution of food production systems and the labor insertion of social groups involved, b) the definition of the processes of food/nutrition is related to the forms of access to food, which are characterized by the social division of labor (the higher the income, greater the access to variety and quantity of food), and c) the relationship between access, food security and insecurity is due both to problems in production and distribution of goods, and to a socio-cultural dynamic related to the transformation of consumption habits and food preferences. For the author, these observations allow us to identify three principles that could lead to better appreciation of the problem of collective satisfaction: 1) food autarky and national security, 2) the right and access to a type of food that adequately covers biological and individual needs, and 3) the use of subjective indicators to describe the social factors that intervene and determine the processes of food/nutrition.

Next, the author discusses the relationship between collective food satisfaction and the health-disease processes, and presents their observations as follows: 1) differential access to food expresses both a social dimension as an expression of biological phenomena; on one side it is determined by the forms of production and consumption of each social group and, on the other, it manifests itself in visible and measurable externalities, such as height or body weight. 2) In Latin America, the paradigm of collective satisfaction of the needs of food/nutrition and its relationship to health-illness analysis favors the classic relationship between inadequate access to food and malnutrition. 3) The theoretical and methodological challenges to that paradigm comprise five issues including: a) to explore the access to food from a gender perspective, b) to analyze the urban-rural access to food as socio-cultural patterns of consumption, c) linking poverty with chronic food/nutrition problems; d) to intensify the analysis of food security and insecurity, and e) to develop theoretical and methodological schemes critical to addressing eating disorders.

Conclusions: For the author, the study of collective satisfaction of the needs of food/nutrition and its relation to health and disease from the parameters of collective health allows one to recognize the social and historical determination of biological expressions of access to food. The author concludes that the coexistence of malnutrition and problems of health-disease are associated with excessive consumption of food by certain sectors of the population, which requires the redefinition of the vision of the merely biological process of food/nutrition.