

Spiritual Context - A Forgotten Concern in Nutrition

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Published: May 02, 2017

Nutritional disorder is an important public health problem. In the present day, nutritional diseases, either under or over nutrition can be seen around the world. Mainly, the physical aspect of nutritional disease is usually focused. However, holistic approach concept must cover bio-psychosocial and spiritual dimensions. Focusing on spiritual aspect of disease, there are many interesting culture bounded medical problems around the world and the good example is the spiritual procession [1]. In Asia and Africa, the spirit procession is common and most case has direct or indirect relationship to local belief and religion [2]. This disorder can be considered as an important culture bounded psychosomatic phenomenon. However, the problem is sometimes very complex. The linkage between spiritual disorder and nutritional problem is a forgotten issue to be hereby discussed. Although there are many kinds of spiritual related medical disorders in different classical cultures, there are limited cases that show clear relationship between "spirit" and "nutrition". Here, some situations will be discussed as case studies. The first case is the spiritual procession during the Chinese style vegetarian festival in South-east Asia (especially for Thailand and Malaysia). The ones who practices strict vegetarianism in local Chinese shrine will get "god" and "goddess" spirit processions and walk around the cities, manifestation magic tolerance to sharp object piercing. With prolonged vegetarianism practice in this population, nutritional anaemia is very common [3,4]. Another case is the "Phii Pob" (common spiritual procession phenomenon in Laos and Thai) [5], which is a patient who is believed to have a bad ghost procession. Those patients will eat only uncooked flesh and viscera hence they can easily get gastrointestinal disease and parasitic infection, which can be the cause of under nutrition [6]. This is

totally contrast to the god procession in the same culture, of which, one who is processed by fairly, such as "Nora", will intake only well-cooked and prepared food and fruit [6]. For sure, those "Nora" will have good health and has no gastrointestinal disease. As noted, spiritual context should be an aspect that cannot be forgotten when we talk about the nutritional problem in the community [6].

Conflict of Interest

None

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Volume 1 Issue 1 May 2017

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