

A Different Approach Towards Nutrition, Food Manufacturing and Public Health

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Although the idea has been going around in my head for a while, when I thought about what title would I use for this paper, I could not stop doubting if I should use the word approach or system. Then I realised that I was already dealing with systems; nutrition, food production and public health and these are like most systems very complex ones, so approach seems to be right way to go [1-4].

Is there a need for an integrated approach towards a better Nutrition, Food manufacturing and Public Health?

In my years of experience as food manufacturer, food safety has always been my main concern, in the times that we are living where the pandemic has altered life as we know it, mostly for the worse, the relevance of food safety has not been diminish, on the contrary. Food is essential to life, there cannot be a proper public health system if other systems like nutrition and food production are not properly integrated as whole for the benefit of the society. It is to be expected that all systems work in an interconnected way, but in my opinion, this is not what we have at present times. Figure 1, represents food, nutrition and health systems that are poorly related or interconnected.

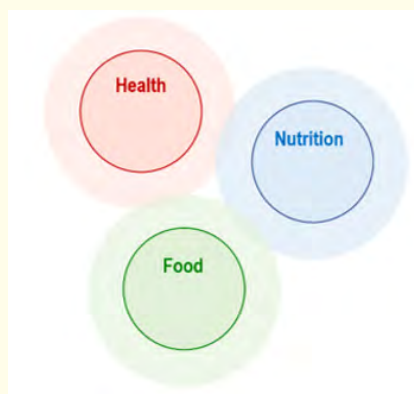


Figure 1: Systems poorly related or interconnected.

This idea jumps into my mind as a result of the adverts related to food that I normally see in my city. Despite I am far from doing a deep study, I decided to do a preliminary sampling of food related posters which are present on billboards, and this is what I found.



Figure 2: Some posters with food related adverts found on the billboards around the city.

During the time that I made this food posters sampling, September 2020, it seems like McDonalds was in a campaign to introduce a new variant of product, the triple cheeseburger from their saver menu, considering that the majority of the posters that I found were related to this product, so this is something to be kept in mind.

I have nothing against advertising, I understand that is an effective way for business to reach their customers, but there's no doubt that one of the problems of modern society is related to nutrition. It is well documented that nutritional issues or malnutrition range from the deficiency of nutrients in our diet to the unbalance excess of these nutrients, in other words it goes from

underweight individuals to extremely obese ones (Malnutrition is a world health crisis). The amount of health problems that malnutrition causes are too important to be disregarded and the level of resources, human and economic, needed to correct them are very significant. But in most cases, we keep fighting the consequences of the problems caused by a poor nutrition and not the causes.

Cravings (the ones for food)

What is the real source our cravings for a certain kind of food?

It is said that usually this is determined by a specific need of our organism, something that is lacking and needs to be supplied (What do your cravings mean?), but the opinions related to the origins of our cravings for food are not unanimous around a single idea. In an article by Jessica Brown (Why you shouldn't trust your food cravings) it is stated that: "Much of the research into cravings has instead found that there are probably several causes for cravings - and they're mostly psychological".

We should all know that our craves for food since many years now have also been determined by the manipulation of our senses. I cannot say that every manipulation is by nature a negative one, but is not a secret that we get more manipulation from advertisement that incite us to consume food which is not precisely the best nutritional quality one, see figure 3.

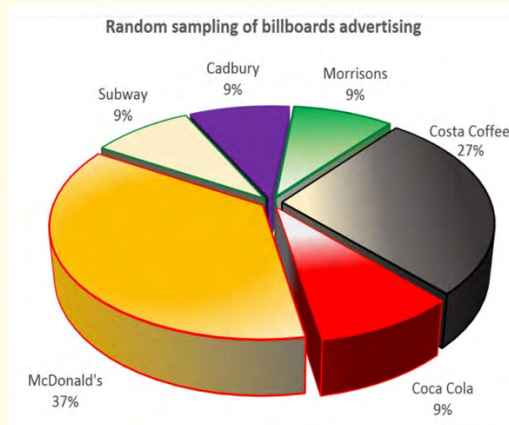


Figure 3: Advertisements by food business.

The food advertisements found around the city are not only those for food producers, we also have food retailers which in many

cases are food producers too, this is why I refer to them all as food business in general.

It comes to my attention that of all food advertisements found, only 1 in 10 actually embraces the concept of what we call a balance diet. Is it because Morrisons is a food retailer and is easier for them to show what should go into a lunch box, is actually what we can call a balance diet?

Maybe it is

But, shouldn't we have more advertisements of this kind around our cities. What is your experience in your city in relation to this situation of food advertisement?

Do you think that the actual approach is orientated to achieve a better public health through a better nutrition provided by the food that should be consumed? Is it the case that food production, nutrition and public health are properly integrated systems for the benefit of the individuals and the society? I think that we need a different approach, what do you think?

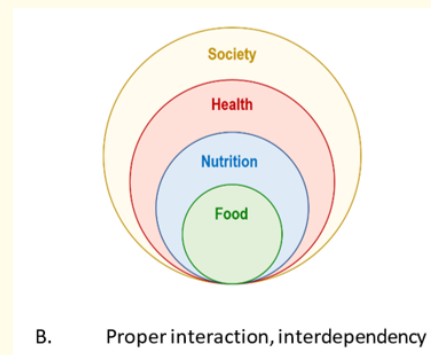
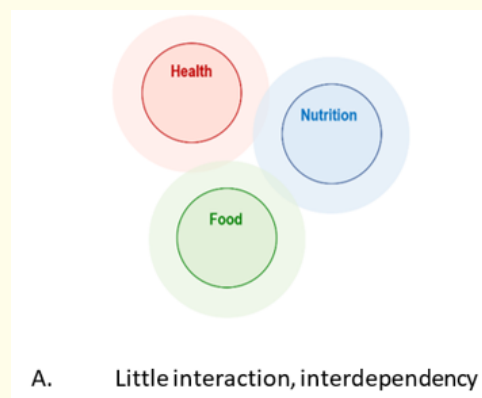


Figure 4: Two different approaches to the same situation.

What could we do?

A different approach is not about one size fits all solution.

Nutritionists should have more authority to educate the society in the way food should be consumed. This directly and indirectly should have a stronger influence on food business.

The aim should not be to control what people should eat and the way they should do it, but to help the society on how to have a better education towards the food we consume.

To develop a healthy eating culture is about to be able to have access to healthy foods which will be made available by the food industry and food business at affordable prices.

All of these should be done without disregarding that food not should only be nutritious but also pleasurable.

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