

THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIFESTYLE- MATRIX OF THE NUTRITIONAL ACT

MARIA DORINA PASCA

University of Medicine and Pharmacy Targu Mures

Received 29 October 2009

Revised 14 January 2010

The quality of life and the lifestyle, represent the sine-qua-non elements necessary for the structural maintenance of the nutritional equilibrium, having logistic consequences, in the implementation under this aspect, of a personalized strategy. Hereby, starting from the quality of life perceived as a social index and going to the attitudinal – behavioural - nutritional determinations of the lifestyle, the whole demarche subscribes to the life-cycle as a matrix to the personal identity. In this context, the nutritional act, from the point of view of nutritional psycho-pedagogy, will be the constructive demarche involving the body and also the soul, making true the maxim: “Mens sana in corpore sano!”

Keywords: life, quality, style, matrix, experience, evolution, standards

To end involving the nutritional act, the quality of life and lifestyle, it would be necessary to define life as Szent-Gyorgy (1981) noticed the phenomenon: “life is an appropriation of substance, a consequence of its structure. It is like a smile. The smile exists, but cannot be separated from the lips, we cannot hold in one hand the smile and in the other the lips, because the smile is only the playing of lips.”

In the same context, Aivanhov (1994) remarked that: “the essential is life and in consequence it has to be protected, purified, consolidated, it has to eliminate all that stops or blocks it, for only due to life you can have: health, beauty, intelligence, love and real richness.”

Thus, life represents a complex of attitudes and behaviours which finally regard the personalized identification of a personality profile, by a micro-universal perspective. But, at a macro level, life through its cycles leaves the mark of its evolution or involution developing some characteristics that decode the quality and lifestyle, bearing the medical-psycho-social mark.

In this context, knowing the base items of human development, we can interfere in the very nutritional act by decoding the structural message. To attain here, it is necessary to know the life cycles, Schioppa and Verza (1981) mentioning:

- a) „the cycle of growth and progress from the first 20 years of life, which include some life periods which, on their time, have specific stages”;
 - b) „adult cycle, which elongates the psychological development of the human being, extending up to 65 years, when the human personality is involved in sharing social and professional responsibilities”;
 - c) „regression ages cycle (of old- age) is extended from 65 years up to death, while the periods that take to final regression are determined of the final cycle”.
- a) „The cycle of growth and progress from the first 20 years of life, which include some life periods which on their time have specific stages”.

Thus, subdividing, we may notify the fact that, during the pre-preschool period 1-3 years, the child must be taught with a certain rigorousness and ceremonial of nutrition itself. In this context, the child needs to be taught to feed himself, to wash hands being familiar with the primary rules of hygiene but also, following in time the element of socializing, to have at least one meal together with his family getting involved in different aspects of longing the table, this way learning new elements for his further communication on such grounds.

Advancing in age, preschool 3-6/7 years, they improve some of the skills of the child from the previous period. It is the moment when he pertains also to another community excepting his family, where it will be necessary to find those evolutionary sequences which may create him such states as: trust, safety and stability (nursery school).

Under such concerns, the nutritional act is also a part of the previous encoding sequence acquired. The preschool child will have three main meals a day and two snacks, which will also determine a certain “discipline” of daily programme, thus, omitting the hour set for having the respective meal, or on purpose disobeying certain pre-established rules bearing on his eating habits will soon lead to disharmony as far as his psycho-social behaviour is concerned.

We already have here the habit of being part of the family and being present at table with others, learning (even silently) to socialize to a certain point. At the same time, the need of inviting friendly companies to have dinner with will be felt.

You may already see at this age, some influences concerning the lifestyle, especially under nutritional aspect, when the preschool child “falls” under the destructible suggestions of those around him, this way he reaches in no time to outbalance, wishing and/or giving up to certain food without any stable, credible and coherent motivation.

Young school children 6/7-10/11 years continue in the nutritional educational act targeting in time the quality of life but also the own lifestyle, for the three meals and one snack, to be compulsory present. The equation of nourishment from the perspective of valuable behaviours starts to become more complex, being characteristic for the following years.

The key word starts from “equilibrium” though breakfast should be served at home before starting the school programme, being considered as a main meal.

It is the moment when tradition appears at table, especially at lunch when the scholar will compulsory have three caloric balanced courses. Dinner also belongs to a specific “diagram”, being served with at least one hour before sleeping. When talking about the snack, healthier would be if it is prepared/cooked in the house, together with the “gainer” following a nutritional communication, but also implementing some elements of education and self-education on this purpose.

Pay attention that in this period: too busy a timetable, private lessons, extracurricular activities or other social manifestations, should not determine an over loaded schedule which may create an unbalance in its nutritional behaviour. Being supervised the scholar will not “deceive” his hunger with “whatnots”, preventing thus the apparition of some behaviours of nutritional risk.

Teenage, being considered as one of the most atypical periods in the individual’s development, lays its mark also from a nutritional point of view, as a lifestyle and quality of life. Even if the nutritional traditions from the family are slowed down, the teenager who purchases certain independence towards those who had “the guardianship” starts to make his own style, especially the nutritional one.

By this moment the nutrition distinguishes mainly in a qualitative way, after sex, ending in the “image” for those around to be important. Our involvement in correcting the nutritional education is sine qua non necessary for re-establishing the equilibrium in the teenager’s life, starting from the common known “three plus one” (three meals and a snack) daily put into practice. Also, respecting a daily activity programme which can manage spending the time efficiently will implicitly bring a healthy lifestyle and life quality which should reach a superior evolutionary standard.

b) „Adult cycle, which elongates the psychological development of the human being, extends up to 65 years, when the human personality is involved in sharing social and professional responsibilities”.

Hereby the youngster steps down too easy from generally maintaining nutritional equilibrium. Suggestive in this context is the relevant observation of Professor Mencinicopschi Gh. (2010) who draws the attention saying that: “The young people start their day with a coffee and a cigarette. They eventually go on with a fast-food meal (sandwich, hamburger, hot-dog) without any nutritional value, but exploding of empty calories, industrial drinks with additives, with synthetic sweeteners and until late they don’t eat anything. In the evening, on the other hand, they “compensate” for all the heavy food.

The step to unconsciousness has already been made, and the returning, sometimes a late one, only underlines how hard it is to accept the truth of the lack of commitment, actually the willingly nutritional immaturity, fact that determines deep changes in the quality and lifestyle, reported to the community that the young is referred to, in our case, despising the style and living the moment.

We can find a moment when the adult is aware of the equilibrium in the nutritional act and when the kitchen becomes a sanctuary and cooking is seen like an art. Every stage of a persons' life, starting with active working life and ending with retirement, is also influenced by the nutritional behaviour. Do the style and life quality put their mark upon the individual? Certainly yes, that's why, being moderate in the nutritional act, but also seeing a nutritionist, may consist the basis of a new healthy lifestyle concept, as an effect for the role, position and social status recently gained.

c) „Regression ages cycle (of old- age) is extended from 65 years up to death, while the periods that take for the final regression are determined by the final cycle”.

Important for this age, the one of getting old, is that overview of the entire metamorphosis from the physiological/organic point of view, of the entire organism. What is perceived is a deceleration of the whole life cycle, thus assuming a new lifestyle through its quality may become relevant. It is necessary to maintain through nutrition, a healthy body and mind, in such a way, that not quantity but quality to be on first place.

The philosophy of every day becomes a permanent concern at this age, thus “eating to be alive” proves intransigence.

The ritual of serving the meal may become a strong point, when the old aged person, feels useful again being part of a family.

Thus, by extrapolation, we can talk about the effect and the consequences of the eating ritual, making the liaisons with the life cycle, marking out the personalized nutritional act as a matrix of personal development. Aivanhov O.M. (1994) remarked that: “When you sit down at the table, start by casting out from your mind all that stops you to eat in peace and harmony. And if you don't manage to do that immediately, wait, starting to eat only in the moment when you are completely calm. If you eat when you are rough and nervous, or resentful, you release disordered vibration, which will be transmitted in everything you'll do next. Even if you try to seem calm, self – governed, you will precede a certain agitation, tension, and you will make mistakes, you will bump into people and things you will say unsuitable words risking to lose your friends or doors to be closed for you. While, if you eat in harmony you will solve better the problems that will come after and even if you have to run all day, you will feel an interior peace which won't be troubled by your activity. Starting with small things we will get very far.”

In this way, learning again the equilibrium between body and soul, makes that everyone's life should settle on new coordinates which certify the quality of life and the lifestyle that could be/ is obtained.

Constructively we end determining the quality of life as a social index when it is given, after OMS (1994) by the individuals' perception upon their social circumstances in the context of cultural values system in which they live and in the addiction of their own needs, standards and aspirations, perceiving at the same time the welfare: physical, psychical, social, and the patient's ability to fulfill their daily tasks.

That's why, in the context of the foregoing, the quality of life gets to determine at a certain point: the position and the social status of the regarded person knowing that:

- social position = represents the place that the individual can take at a certain time, which can create social advantages or by contrary, negative behavioural attitudes;
- social role = it is constituted of the possibility of making use of the rights and duties provided in that individuals' status, knowing the fact that this may change after the social requirements and circumstances;
- status = represents the position that an individual has toward a group in society (educational, homely, biological, social status etc.).

We end thus to characterize one person after “what, how, how much, where, when, why” eats looking upon the position, the role and the social status, leading to attitudinal – behavioural - nutritional connotations? Certainly ‘yes’ preparing the way of the one in question through identities of nutritional risk behaviour “giving away the cooking tradition, eating ritual” but also the psychological impact which the whole process may have, mostly with negative consequences upon the person who pertains the quality of his life to the image within the community.

As a desiderate of the foregoing and looking from the perspective of nutritional psycho-pedagogy, the quality of life has to fundamentally rely on the equilibrium relation between all the factors generally involved in human development and/or human evolution.

It is shaped the identity of nourishment which has to be for the body and also for the soul, being known the sensorial component in accepting or finally refusing the nutriment, practically not having any evolutive structural motivation in the nutritional act. Thus, we can perceive the things that Hippocrates brought close to the philosophy of life viewed as an element in health maintaining as follows: “your nourishment to be your cure, and your cure to be your nourishment.”

According to Rudica and Cortea (2004), the lifestyle represents the curiosity of understanding a life event to its deepest roots and consequences, and for others means questioning and knowledge.

In this way, the lifestyle is personalized, being influenced by: change, attitude and behaviour, bringing actually together the dependence upon the two factors, Weber (1993): *life behaviour* - referring to the options that people have in choosing a certain lifestyle; *life chances* - representing the probability of practical accomplishment of this personal options, having in sight the structural conditions necessary for a certain lifestyle, the appreciation being especially made for the economic reasons.

Life behaviour. In this context, determining the change of a noxious lifestyle, it is made, without doubt, through education, the latter one determining profound structural motivations of the individual.

Thus, running various health educational programmes at any schooling levels (from nursery school until college) with strong intellectual behavioural motivations, will determine new attitudes. Starting from educating for a healthy body and mind, will end determining those submitted to the educational act, to respect the apple, to understand water and vegetables, to treasure nature, but mainly to build in time, a healthy lifestyle.

I don't consider that the act of cooking/ preparing the food or/and the recipes currently presented in media bring any interest, on the contrary, they present only from a certain angle the nutritional act. Is it only for the eye or for body and soul also!?! How and how much does it educate?!

If not, they will process at a cognoscible level as “simple moments of feeding”, which may be absent, or on the contrary they abound. And oscillating between “yes” and “no”, we may release a total lack of interest for the nutritional act itself, reaching the undesirable risk extremes like: anorexia, voracious appetite, obesity and diet, which may create important unbalances physiological/organic and also psycho-social.

We may ask then what or who we are reported to the nutritional act? Yes, for sure.

Life chances. It is the moment when the success may be determined by our own nutritional behaviour, thus bringing into its full right the healthy food, determines a new ethic concept, that of being aware of the human value.

Once changed the perception, the chances in life success will increase educational and also social level, thus the new lifestyle may and actually determines the right in belonging to the community that we want to be part of, or to which we identify ourselves with.

Under such a valuable complex, the motivation of an adequate nutritional matrix, certify in/at time the personal quality and lifestyle, remembering Pitagora's words (Dumitrescu R 1996) - being so simple and wise: Watch upon the good health of your body. Eat, drink and make moderate exercises. Your right measure is the one which doesn't let you lose vigour. And get used with a pure and severe diet.”

Seen in an interrelation evolutive valuable perspective, the quality of life and also the lifestyle, must determine the necessary change in implementing a new nutritional behaviour having as a purpose preventing some major medical-psycho-social unbalances of the individual.

Thus, as a consequence, our question is that we will feed “fashionable” not to deteriorate/ alter our image, or we will eat that nourishment which by its effect justifies the acute need, above all forms, to maintain our health, the physical and also the psychical one?

Under such a grievance, the whole matrix of the nutritional act develops a component of interdisciplinary education concerning under different aspects the reference to society/ community starting from the quality and the lifestyle that the subject develops, wishing to bring forward: life, health and education, making from “living and eating” an art.

References

- Aivanhov O. M. (1994). *Reguli de aur pentru fiecare zi*, Ed. Prosveta, București
- Holford P. (2007). *Dieta cu încărcătură glicemică scăzută*, Ed. All, București
- Bălăceanu- Stolnici, C. (1998). *Geriatrică practică*, Ed. Medicală Amaltea, București
- Dumitrescu R.(1996). *Taina longevității*, Ed. Trei, București
- Holford P. (2008). *Cartea nutriției optime*, Ed. All, București
- Hurgoiu, V. (1999). *Alimentația copilului sănătos și bolnav*, Ed. Medicală, București
- Iordăchescu G. (2006). *Psihologia alimentației umane*, Ed. Academica, Galați
- Mencinicopschi, Gh. (2010). *Și noi ce mai mâncăm?*, Ed. Coreus Publishing, Snagov
- Pașca M. D. (2009). *Elemente de psihopedagogie nutrițională*, Ed. University Press, Tg. Mureș
- Pașca, M.D. (2010). *Mâncărurile gătite în povestea și basmul românesc*, Ed. Ardealul, Tg. Mureș
- Rudică T. Cortea D. (2007). *Psihologia omului în proverbe*, Ed. Polirom, Iași
- Szent- Gyorgy A. (1984). *Pledoarie pentru viață*, Ed. Politică, București
- Seligman - M. E. P. (2004). *Optimismul se învață*, Ed. Humanitas, București
- Șchiopu U. Verza E. (1981). *Psihologia vârștelor*, Ed. Didactică și Pedagogică, București
- Weber M. (1993). *Etica protestantă și spiritul capitalismului*, Ed. Humanitas, București