

Introduction

Nutrition is the selection, preparation and ingestion of food according to the body's dietary needs. Good nutrition that involves taking sufficient and well balanced diets is a cornerstone to good health, especially when combined with regular physical exercises. Poor nutrition results to increased susceptibility to diseases, reduced productivity, reduced immunity and impaired mental and physical development. However, nutrition is affected by numerous factors such as culture, environment, social psychological, physical among others (Contento, 2011). This paper pays high attention to how cultural and environmental factors which affect nutrition in Nigeria.

Cultural factors such as dietary restriction to pregnant women, the belief that children should not be given food when suffering from diarrhea and children sharing food from the same bowl affects the health of most individuals in Nigeria. According to recent studies, most children suffer from malnutrition after sharing food in the same bowl since most fail to take the adequate amounts that their active body demands. Consecutively, environmental factors such as urbanization and white collar job have made most individuals in Nigeria to take calorie-rich diets, which in conjunction with less body activity have resulted in most of them developing obesity (Crawford, 2010).

Recent studies indicate that the prevalence of malnutrition and obesity are increasing in an alarming rate. This increase of prevalence rates is directly proportional to the costs that the families, societal and the nation incur in the attempts of reversing the situation. The obese and malnourished individuals are economically inactive making most societies to lure behind all the time. Studies depict that malnourishment can be addressed through taking balanced and sufficient diets while obesity is through physical activity and avoiding fatty diets. However, some occupations require most individuals to go for fast foods such as chips and doughnuts which have high amounts of calories, following lack of time for exercise and thus hindering prevention mechanisms (Crawford, 2010).

Conclusion

It is, therefore, evident that cultural and environmental factors affect nutritional habits in most individuals in Nigeria leading to adverse health outcomes such as obesity and malnutrition. However, it is necessary to take balanced diets, followed by body exercises in order to realize best health outcomes.

References

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- Crawford, D. (2010). *Obesity epidemiology: From aetiology to public health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.