

2nd European Colloquium on Ethnopharmacology (ESE) 11th International Conference on Ethnomedicine (AGEM)

24th-27th March 1993, Heidelberg

Medicines and Foods: The Ethnopharmacological Approach
Heilmittel und Nahrungsmittel aus ethnopharmakologischer Sicht

BFE

N. 5865

THE USE OF TRADITIONAL NUTRITIONAL WISDOM IN MODERN NUTRITION RESEARCH (Thoughts on some important sources of information for nutritional epidemiology)

Oltersdorf, Ulrich - Dr., Director and Professor
Institute of Nutritional Economics and Sociology, Federal
Research Centre for Nutrition; Stuttgart-Hohenheim (Germany)
(Bundesforschungsanstalt für Ernährung)

Nutrition research looks for answers to questions like: "Why we eat what we eat when we eat it, and what will be the effects on our functions and to our health". Since everybody has to eat daily several times, there are countless daily nutritional experiments. Mankind had to select rather carefully what could be edible in order to survive and to develop. There are two contrary aspects; eating - as an act of ingestion of exogenous materials - is in principal risky. There is a natural sense of neophobia; but men's capabilities for inventions and their curiosity increase the potential to survive and to spread into almost all ecological zones. Men can eat almost all plants and animals and their are very different human food habits.

Research which evaluates traditional food habits and makes use of the experiences of such indigeneous nutritional experiments is still an open research area. The potential benefit of such kind of nutrition research will be shown by some examples, which are interpreted in the light of knowledge of modern nutritional sciences. There are benefits in traditional food habits - like breastfeeding and eating mixtures of cereals and legumes; in traditional food storage practices - like fermentations; in traditional food preparations - like the range of Asian soya recipies; and in using of traditional cooking utensil - like cooking maize in clay pots.

Further examples of benefits of such nutritional epidemiology research refer to the variability of human nutrient requirements, the adaptation potential of men, the re-introducing of forgotten traditional "novel foods" and the question of the human instinct for nutrients.

Organised by:
ESE, 27 boulevard d'Anvers, F - 67000 Strasbourg
AGEM, Hauptstr. 235, D-W-6900 Heidelberg