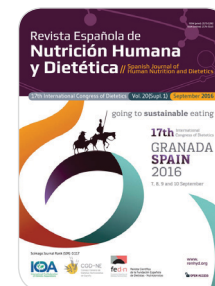


# 17th International Congress of Dietetics

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9 September 2016 | INTERVENTION AREA: RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION IN DIETETICS

### SHORT LECTURE



### Taste education and food sensory approach: a challenging pedagogy for Health education in dietitians' training

Evelyne Orsat\*, Sophie Bucher Della Torre, Xavier Marsault, Jocelyne Depeyre, Ludivine Soguel Alexander

Nutrition and Dietetics Department, University of Applied Sciences and Art Western Switzerland.

\*Contact: [evelyne.orsat@edu.ge.ch](mailto:evelyne.orsat@edu.ge.ch)

In this session, we propose to define sensory approach, to explore its application with social and healthy purposes and to present an example of integration in the educational curricula of future dietitians in Switzerland.

Consistent with the "learning by doing" principle, we plan to include an interactive workshop with sensory activities in this session.

Human food preferences are a strong determinant of eating behaviours (1). Individual food habits may affect everyone's health and lead to extreme thinness, overweight or illness. With an alarming prevalence of obesity worldwide (2), and in a general context of food related disorders, sensory approach appears as an attractive complement to traditional dietary education. In Europe, several programs as "Les classes du goût", "SAPERE" A.I.S.B.L., "EPODE", "Senso5", are based on a sensory approach, with the ultimate goal to develop healthy food patterns or to increase food variety. More generally, this approach may be used with healthy populations or patients of all ages.

In sensory approach, it's currently accepted that a food has no taste by itself. Food taste is rather the expression of sensitive perceptions when sapid molecules meet sensitive receptors of the eater. The goal of sensory education is that every child, adult or elderly people acquire the consciousness or their perceptions. By focusing attention on their senses, eaters will discover another dimension of tasted foods. This process should involve an active participation and develop food curiosity. Sensory education appears to positively impact willingness to taste novel food in children (3,4). However

few studies have evaluated the long term effects of sensory approaches programs, leaving opportunities for dietitians to develop project in that field.

Sensory approaches appear as an additional and complementary tool for dietitians to promote healthy eating. However, their use and implementation at a professional level require a detailed training based on a specific pedagogy. Since 2006, the Nutrition and Dietetics Department of University of Applied Sciences and Art, Western Switzerland, has formally included sensory approaches skills in the Bachelor program. Currently, the training program is structured around two main areas: sensory education and sensory analysis. At the theoretical level, students learn about: the physiology of 5 senses, sensory structuring, changing tastes according to age or disease or drugs, engineering in sensory education training and sensory analysis. They develop skills and competences required for a professional practice of sensory approaches through practical workshop. More specifically, at the end of their education, future dietitians are able to: master vocabulary, implement tasting protocols, create sensory awareness program, manage sensory analysis techniques, and train other professionals in sensory approach. In terms of training engineering, this transversal approach has been integrated in modules such as "Human Nutrition", "Public Health", "Therapeutic Education", "Food Science and Technology", included in lectures, workshops and practice.

To integrate sensory approach effectively in food education, a step of personal experimentation is essential. This allows students to further analyse their own sensory perceptions and awareness of individual differences. The sensory approach

encourages the eater to expand his food repertory, to listen to his own perceptions and to understand those of the others. The sensory approach leads the consumer to become aware of his behaviour towards food and to integrate an attitude of understanding of pleasure or displeasure around food and dishes. With sensory education and analysis, foods are not labelled as "good or bad" for health, but more emphasis is given to sensorial perceptions and emotional reaction while eating.

In conclusion, dietitians have to develop specific skills to integrate sensory approach in their practice and formally to evaluate the impact of interventions through research.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors state that there are no conflicts of interest in preparing the manuscript.

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