**GASTRONOMY CONTRIBUTION TO FEMALE CONSUMERS WELLBEING IN WEIGHT LOSS SITUATION**

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The “Sociedad Española para el studio de la obesidad” (SEEDO) reported that 81% of people who follow losing weight diets fail (1). One reason associated with this failure is the perception by consumers that a restrictive caloric diet is hard, unsatisfactory and not stimulating at all (2).

Gastronomy could play an important role on the improvement of the sensory perception. There are many culinary techniques and resources which could change flavour and texture. Culinary skills may contribute to reduce caloric intake without generating negative feelings related to hanger and privation (3). Many factors associated with dieting impact on the personal wellbeing which hence could influence consumer response.

The aim of this research is to study the effect of a gastronomic improvement in diet menus on the wellbeing of women in a weight loss situation.

Two menus were designed and prepared with the same ingredients (chicken, carrots, broccoli, potatoes and pineapple) and calories (625,7 kcal). One of them was a typical diet menu and the other one was a gastronomic improved menu. Both menus were elaborated and served to 71 women at the Basque Culinary Center’s restaurant. Participants were invited to have lunch twice (one menu per day) at the restaurant by groups of two to four people. Once they had finished the meal, they were asked to rate the degree of liking and all the items of the wellbeing questionnaire (4) of each menu.

Data were input to ANOVA models, where degree of liking and the items of the wellbeing questionnaire were the dependent variables and menus were the independent variables.

Significant differences were found between menus in the hedonic response and in the wellbeing questionnaire. Specifically, the emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of the questionnaire were the most affected by the gastronomic improvement, as compared to the physical and intellectual dimensions. The gastronomic menu was more liked and was related to higher ratings on wellbeing items. Quite surprisingly the gastronomic elaboration received higher ratings of satiety sensation but was perceived as less helpful on weight control.

Our results support the idea that the study of consumer perception in a real context involves not only the hedonic and emotional response. The inclusion of wellbeing questionnaires in consumer research could provide a more complete description of consumer experience while eating food.

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