

ABSTRACT

A Sociological Analysis of Food-Consumption Practices of Spousal Network on Eating Behaviour of Adults with Type 2 diabetes in South Trinidad

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This dissertation presented a sociological analysis of food-consumption practices of the spousal network on eating behaviour of middle-aged adults with Type 2 diabetes in South Trinidad. Data collection comprised a household cross-sectional survey of 250 participants and semi-structured interviews with 12 participants between the ages 45-64 years.

Integrating Parsons' AGIL Schema with Weber's Social Action Theory, a Social Theory of Eating Behaviour was developed to inform the study. The quantitative component of this study found that the food-consumption practices of spousal network had an inverse relationship with following recommended diabetic diet plan, eating the recommended quantity of food, and having 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily, and a positive relationship with having high fat foods and sweet foods. The multiple regression analysis indicated that the variables for food-consumption practices accounted for significant proportions of the variance in eating behaviour of the adults with Type 2 diabetes. The analysis of the qualitative data revealed eight core themes that afforded insights into eating behaviour namely, nature of social action, motives, action orientation, impact on social relationship, decision-making process, rules of behaviour, influence of communal relationship, and power dynamics. Secondary analysis of data based on the Social Theory of Eating Behaviour indicated that cultural responsiveness, attributes of connectivity, roles and responsibilities, marital interaction, and power relations within the spousal network were significant social influences on eating behaviour.

The conclusion of this research was that the nature of the social practices in relation to the food-consumption practices of the spousal network was influencing eating behaviour. The implication of this study was that a social approach, that included both spouses, would be required to address eating behaviour among adults with Type 2 diabetes in Trinidad.

Keywords: Caroline Alexis-Thomas; food-consumption practices; spousal network; eating behaviour; Type 2 diabetes; Trinidad and Tobago