

Healthy Original Food Promoting Child Mental Health

Dr Abdulbaghi Ahmad, MD, SBCAP, PhD, Associate Professor/ Senior Specialist in CAP, Uppsala University, Sweden. IACAPAP Ambassador/ Founding Director of Metin Health House for Child Mental Health, Duhok, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Email abdulbaghi.ahmad@neuro.uu.se

Abstract

Background: Child mental health is considered as indicator for modernisation in any society. The Metin Health House (MHH) is a novel semi-private center in Duhok to build up healthy personality starting from childhood. The first phase of MHH started in 2008 in Duhok, Kurdistan region of Iraq, for prevention and treatment of child mental health problems in order to provide clinical services as a complementary to the novel academic unit Child Mental Health (CMH) that was established at the college of medicine, university of Duhok in 2001 in collaboration with the Uppsala university in Sweden. The aim of the academic unit CMH was to provide education in CMH at three levels, postgraduate Master degree in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, mandatory education in child mental health delivered at the fifth year of medical curriculum, and community-based education for teachers, psychologists and health staff. The first phase of the MHH has been providing child psychiatric out-patient services and preschool child care according to the Swedish model adjusted to the local circumstances (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NaY8qkSA925Ziwhg5O6oG9_hbdIxSV4O/view?usp=sharing).

Problem: Recent research is increasingly indicating food and nutrition during childhood as major factors in producing psychopathology during adulthood. Healthy food might contribute to preventing mental health problems, particularly when provided during pregnancy and early childhood. Rapid social transition from collective closed system to individual-based open society, as it is happening in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, usually is accompanied with corruption and neglect of the rural areas with deep influence of ancient traditions. Food and medical products imported from the occupying countries (Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria), which are often expired or unusable, usually replace local production of fertile agricultural land and long experiences in food production for self-sufficiency along with effective resilience and survival strategies.

Objectives: Healthy Original Food (HOF) is a novel concept for building up a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between MHH and Duhok University to improve standard of living and quality of life in Kurdistan. Effective food traditions have to be refreshed and modern methods have to be used to rediscover and modernise indigenous food production to provide children with the necessary healthy food and appropriate nutrition to form healthy personality for building up a prosperous well developed society.

Method: Following governmental investment law, the construction of the second phase of the MHH is reaching it's final stage. Collaboration has been started with the Duhok University to obtain governmental approval for PPP. A modern maternal and child care system is to be integrated with an evidence-based plan providing local capacities for planting, producing, industrialising and marketing original food production under strict scientific health supervision with special focus on providing a healthy environment for the child to build up healthy personality starting from conception through childhood to adulthood. Applied consciousness is based on the principles of salutogenesis instead of pathogenesis.

Expected Results: Child mental health promotion will be achieved at different levels measured by pre-specified outcomes. Thousands of job opportunities are expected to develop healthy original food products both for indigenous use and to be exported abroad.

Biography Abdulbaghi Ahmad has his expertise in child mental health and child and adolescent psychiatry with focus on childhood trauma and improving posttraumatic health and wellbeing. His open and contextual creative concept based on a bio-psycho-social model of trauma and posttraumatic growth creating new pathways for improving the immunity and child mental health. He has developed several methods of investigation, prevention and treatment after years of clinical experience, research, evaluation, teaching and administration both in hospital and education institutions. The current innovation is a new concept to utilise indigenous capacities for production of healthy food to provide suitable environment for the child to build up a healthy personality.

