

September blog
Fabio Gomes

This month, after my fruit of the month highlight, I defend the fun dimension of nutrition, plus our usual cultural dimension session. I also bring you good and bad news from the organisation of nutrition congresses, and the September 'Joke of the month' involves a lawsuit and the Coca-Cola company.

Biodiversity of flavours
Spread the taste



Here is more nutrition from nature. I am harvesting some *graviolas* (soursop fruit). Originally from Central America where they grew wild in the Antilles and other places, they have adapted quickly and easily to humid climates and lower altitudes. In Brazil they are especially cultivated in the North-Eastern states. In the Amazon, thanks to their cultivation by the original indigenous people, they grow wild now. As you can see in the picture above, further south, as here in Maricá outside the city of Rio de Janeiro, the soil and climate is also right for them. The indigenous people, who before the European invaders came lived all over Brazil, cultivated them and many other fruits for their therapeutic use. Plus, their good smell, soft and juicy pulp, and bittersweet flavour, are the passport of *graviolas* to the whole world.

Dimensions of scientific disciplines
Make nutrition fun

Last month I brought you the new name for various junk foods given by PepsiCo's Chief Executive Officer Indra Nooyi. These she says are the 'fun-for-you-foods'. The idea, is that such foods provide you with fun, so if you are sad you should eat and drink a bunch of them. Actually of course they make you bloated and not happier, but incessant advertising and marketing associates them with moments of joy and pleasure.

This reminds me of those toys that do everything for the child, and so give nothing. These harm children, because they undermine natural creativity. Take the example of a doll walking, singing, and dancing in front of a child. And ask who is having fun in fact? Who is playing? It's more fun to be the toy! The child's job is just to watch the toy having fun. This also applies to the junk defined as 'fun-for-you-foods', and in this case it is even worse, because as well as you being passive before the product, this 'toy' comes loaded with calories, salt, sugar and/or fat.

Real enjoyment

This month's commentary
World Nutrition



C Gopalan
My life in nutrition

**The testimony of our first
honorary life member**

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new commentary here](#)

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member's profile here](#)

Geoffrey Cannon



Burgers, fries and statin, please
Let's make nutrition sexy
What Aldous Huxley tells us

[Access Geoffrey here](#)

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Reggie Annan



Malnutrition: physicians' pledge

In this way the junk food industry abuses the idea of fun. We can find plenty of real fun with nutritious food. Cultivating, collecting, preparing and eating good food can be joyful. I bring you one example from the days I spent this July in Silva Jardim, a municipality located in the countryside of Rio de Janeiro state, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) from the city centre. I arrived at Dona Manuela's rural property on a colourful afternoon and was received in the kitchen, the place built to be the most pleasant in the house, and you bet that it was. We all had wonderful talk and food in this kitchen all day long.

What I can say about it was written by our great poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade in 'The table':

...around the large table,
 (...em torno da mesa larga,) they set aside dull diets,
 (largavam as tristes dietas,) they forgot about their frills,
 (esqueciam seus fricotes,) and they all had a real time...
 (e tudo era farra honesta...)

We did indeed set aside the frills of dull diets. Now I show you a special detail of this visit to Silva Jardim which illustrates true enjoyment of food. You never leave lovely places and lovely people like these empty-handed. So here is Dona Manuela harvesting chicory from her garden for the visitors to take home. Look how pleased she is!



Another great example drawn from that day comes from Dona Manuela's grandsons Gustavo and João. Before the lunch, João asked Bethânia his mother what her mother would prepare for lunch, and Bethânia replied 'I don't know son, I think it's beef'. And he ran towards the kitchen saying 'I'm going to ask her to prepare a fish for me.' Sergio, his father exclaimed: 'He wants to fish his lunch in the pond!' And here it is, in the picture below, Gustavo and João fishing their lunch! Beyond the real job of catching the fish, they are having a lot of fun, aren't they? But some still insist on defining eating junk foods as having fun.



Congresses: sponsorship
Bad and good news

In 2000 the International Pediatric Association (IPA) approved their *Guidelines for Relationships with Industry*. These state: 'Donations will not be accepted from

Honouring Nelson Mandela
 MDGs: just a dream in Africa?
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July commentary
 Urban Jonsson



**The rise and fall
 of paradigms in world
 food & nutrition policy**

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 commentary here](#)

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June commentary
 Harriet Kuhnlein



Here is the good news

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 commentary here](#)

[Access the June editorial here](#)

Fabio Gomes



My enjoyment of real fun food

industries directly engaged in... negative practices including ... violations of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, or other unethical marketing practices.’(1)

So far so good. But this good news went bad at the 26th International Pediatric Congress held in Johannesburg this July(2). The list of sponsors includes several companies that have been violating the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, as International Baby Food Action Network reports show.

You might think that such relationships with conflicted industry are ‘in the blood’ and inevitable these days. So I bring you good news. Between 11 and 15 July the city of Stockholm held the XI International Congress on Obesity. I was there. With the humorous *Stephan Rössner* presiding, the congress addressed sponsorship very seriously, and showed how possible it is to convene a huge well organised congress without money from conflicted industry. Most of the stands were reserved by body measurement companies. The *International Association for the Study of Obesity* (IASO) with the *International Obesity Task Force* (IOTF) stood strongly against food processing industry sponsorship and provided an excellent and high standard congress for participants. It can be done!

References

- *International Pediatric Association. IPA Guidelines for relationships with Industry. IPA, 2005.* Obtainable at <http://www2.kenes.com/ipa/sponsor/Documents/Guidelines.pdf>
- <http://www2.kenes.com/ipa/sponsor/Pages/Sponsors.aspx>

Joke of the month

Vitaminsugarywater



Lawyers representing the Washington DC-based *Center for Science in the Public Interest* (CSPI), and consumers from three US states, have accused the Coca-Cola Company of using deceptive labelling on its Vitaminwater™ drinks (1). In its statement, CSPI says: ‘The company claims that Vitaminwater™ variously reduces the risk of chronic disease, reduces the risk of eye disease, promotes healthy joints, and supports optimal immune function, and uses health buzz words such as “defense”, “rescue,” “energy,” and “endurance” on labels’ (2). The accusation is that the Coca-Cola Company is placing health claims on a soda without bubbles.

According to CSPI ‘the 33 grams of sugar in each bottle of Vitaminwater™ do more to promote obesity, diabetes, and other health problems than the vitamins in the drinks do to perform the advertised benefits listed on the bottles.’ In response to the attempt from Coca-Cola to dismiss the lawsuit, Judge John Gleeson of the US District Court in New York decided that the case should proceed.

So thus far the joke is on Coke. Ha ha! But let’s see what is the final decision. Part of the company’s defence may well be to say that all the witty copywriting about the joys of Vitaminwater™ are obviously not meant to be taken seriously. If this defence succeeds, the joke will be on gullible consumers. Coca-Cola’s representative reacted to the decision saying ‘We believe plaintiff’s claims are without merit and will ultimately be rejected’ (3). Please hold on, my dear readers! The lawsuit can be found in great detail here(2). Before the Coca-Cola Company succeeds in getting a vitaminwater™, smartwater™ or fruitwater™ bottle on the desks of younger office workers from all over the world, I suggest we take Geoffrey Cannon’s tip: ‘There is after all also the choice of justwater’ (4). indoctrinated into seeing as part of the ‘good life’

References

1. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/07/23/health/main6706875.shtml>

There is no need for industry support
Vitaminwater in the dock?

[Access Fabio here](#)

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May commentary
Michael Latham

The great vitamin A fiasco



[Access Michael Latham's May
commentary here](#)

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Claudio Schuftan



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Problems with the medical model
Nutritionists, the time to act is now!

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2. http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/order_on_m-dismiss_doc_44.pdf
3. <http://www.beveragedaily.com/Markets/Coca-Cola-fails-to-dismiss-Vitaminwater-lawsuit?noount>
4. Cannon G. Out of the box. *Public Health Nutrition* 2008; **11**(9): 877-880.

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Please cite as: Gomes F. Spread the taste, and other items. [Column] Website of the World Public Health Nutrition Association, September 2010. Obtainable at www.wphna.org.

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This column is reviewed by Geoffrey Cannon. I thank Catarina Prima for taking the photographs of the harvesting of graviola. I also thank Bethania for inviting me and Catarina to spend the lovely weekend in Silva Jardim with her family. Thanks to Manuela for sharing her wisdom and fresh herbs, and to Sergio for the nice talks. I also acknowledge Gustavo and João for inspiring the story on making nutrition fun.

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September blog: Fabio Gomes
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Keith West, Alfred Sommer

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