

HEALTH ISSUES AND NUTRITION IN THE BALKANS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to represent differences and similarities of Balkan cuisine and their reflection to the health among population in Balkan countries. Importance of this study is based on fact that this is the first study where an attempt to compile all known data about food related health issues in Balkan could reflect in improvement of the health care, considering the food as disease and remedy in the same time.

The available data from the reports of World Health Organization for different food-related diseases, as well as, from the available studies considering the same issue, have been used for this compilation. Data were processed through comparative analysis and descriptive statistic. Parameters that have been described include: water and sanitary facilities, hygiene, food processing, life expectancy, and the influence of traditional nutrition to the health issue, like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancers of the digestive system.

The highest discrepancy of food-related diseases among Balkan countries where found in incidence and mortality of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and gastric cancer. These parameters are strongly related by the traditional food processing and consumption in some parts of the Balkans as well as with rooted habits of the population for consumption some nutrition despite the damage that can cause serious health problems.

Balkan cuisine is more or less similar in all countries of this region, but the lifestyle, health system, tradition, influence of the western world as well as food processing and industry are main parameters that have strong influence in health issue among the population of the Balkans.

Key words: *Balkans, Food, Health issues, Diseases.*