



International Research Network for Food Quality and Health

Seminar February 23rd, from 9-10 am CET on ZOOM

Positive Health as a Framework for Investigating the Impact of an Organic Diet: Concept, Interventions, and Methodological Insights

The workshop is free of charge, but you have to sign up at shb@nexs.ku.dk, just write FQH as subject and you will receive a zoom link for the meeting

Program:

9.00-9.05 Welcome by Machteld Huber

9.05 – 9.35 "Positive Health as a Framework for Investigating the Impact of an Organic Diet: Concept, Interventions, and Methodological Insights" by Senior researcher Marja van Vliet



Marja van Vliet, PhD, is associated as senior researcher with the Institute for Positive Health (Utrecht, the Netherlands). She has a background in human nutrition (Wageningen University, the Netherlands) and previously worked at the Louis Bolk institute (Bunnik, the Netherlands) on projects concerning human health effects of (organic) nutrition. During her work she adopted a holistic perspective on health and got interested in a systems approach for studying human health. In this regard, she collaborated with Machteld Huber during the development of the pioneering concept of Positive Health. In her work she builds on further theoretical and practical underpinnings of concept and is actively engaged in

shaping methodological research frameworks for projects with a systems approach. This includes the INSUM project (Indicators for assessment of health effects of consumption of sustainable, organic school meals in Ecoregions) and community health projects in the Nederland.

9.35-9.55 Discussions in plenum or break-out rooms dependent on number of attendants

9.55-10.00 Wrap-up, presentation of next workshop and goodbye

Abstract

Positive Health as a Framework for Investigating the Impact of an Organic Diet: Concept, Interventions, and Methodological Insights

In 2011, a new concept of health was proposed: 'health as the ability to adapt and self-manage'. This dynamic concept was inspired by an earlier study wherein chickens fed by organic food demonstrated superior resilience to immunological responses compared to those on a conventional diet. This expression of robust health through resilience defied explanation by the traditional WHO definition. Within the Dutch public health landscape, this concept was further elaborated in Positive Health. Comprising six dimensions (bodily functions, mental wellbeing, meaningfulness, quality of life, social and societal participation and daily functioning), Positive Health seeks to foster overall wellbeing and health. It underscores the broad and interconnected nature of health. Given the convergence between Positive Health and the principles of sustainable healthy diets and organic practices, Positive Health emerges as a suitable framework for investigating the health effects of organic diets. For instance, when exploring the somatic health impacts of an organic diet, Positive Health insists that these effects should be comprehensively considered. Several nutritional health interventions in the Netherlands have already adopted Positive Health as a conceptual framework, and the INSUM project aims to integrate it as a cornerstone in their interventions. As a systems approach, Positive Health necessitates thoughtful methodological considerations. This entails identifying appropriate indicators to measure health changes and contemplating suitable research designs.

In this presentation, we delve deeper into the concept of Positive Health, showcase practical examples of interventions, and discuss methodological considerations in applying this framework.