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Child-raising knowledge of Triqui men and women: Generational changes and continuities

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Mendoza Z. *Saberes de mujeres y varones Triquis respecto de la crianza de sus hijos: Cambios y continuidades generacionales.*[Child-raising knowledge of Triqui men and women: Generational changes and continuities]. *Salud Colectiva* (Buenos Aires, Argentina) 2006 January-April; 2 (1): 47-59.

Objectives: To analyze and describe the changes and continuities in knowledge about child-raising held by two generations of Triqui women and men.

Methodology: Qualitative, by means of participatory observation and interviews. Eighteen persons --ten women and eight men 16 to 50 years old-- from two generations were interviewed. Members of the older generation were interviewed in their home community (Copala, Oaxaca), and members of the younger generation in Mexico City.

Results: The author found that Triqui families have become markedly smaller, especially in terms of the number of children. The older generation had 8 to 12 children, while the younger generation had 4 or 5 children. Changes have occurred in the representations held by Triqui women. While to the older generation, children meant security in old age, the younger generation is no longer sure that children ensure future security, and is more conscious of the time and money involved in raising children. Differences were also found in the care given to babies. While for the older generation, breastfeeding was seen as the best maternal care, and lasted up to four years in some cases, children of the second generation were weaned at 12 months of age. This was influenced by the men, who believe that formula feeding is better than breastfeeding because it involves a processed, expensive product.

Conclusions: Changes observed in the practices and knowledge of Triqui women and men who participated in the study are associated with factors such as increased levels of education, and incorporation of women into the paid workforce, which are more frequent and intense in urban settings.