

Child Obesity: Blessings for the Family Table, in the children's name we say.
Family enrolment in risk communication - a local tryout in the Azorean islands.

Marcos, R. S.; Arroz, A. M.; Gabriel, R.; Neves, I. C., Rego, I. E. & Palos, A. C.

Risk communication, child obesity, participative research, material culture, intergenerational intervention

World Health Organization has come to recognize, since 1998, that obesity is one of the major public health problems, that will, most likely be, one of the great epidemics of the twentieth century, in the developing countries. The Azorean context is no exception.

Specialists in the field have come to the conclusion that no risk communication strategy addressing this issue should alienate the families. Therefore, in order to involve them in the construction of a wider social consciousness of children obesity as problematic health risk, (and consequently educating for health by adopting healthier food habits and lifestyles) a participating intervention strategy was conceived. Trying to recover and reconfigure Mediterranean and Azorean meal liturgy.

By conducting a tryout action where voluntary families enroll themselves to the intervention study, a communicational device will be created characterized by an intergenerational participation in the construction of a table cloth incorporating each family's identity. The making of the table cloth, the choice of what and how to be represented and the whole process of creation are a privileged common ground for the exchange of ancient knowledge, habits, and stories, narratives, contributing for a more reflecting practice of the meal as a richer and meaningful ritual.

By involving the targeted groups under analysis in the design of the message itself, this communication risk project aims to test cooperative ways of building communication devices, and to evaluate the process impacts, outputs, and the potential outcomes pointed out. During the process they will be followed up by the research team on a succession of key moments to discuss and visually represent their own habits of mind and thoughts – individually and as a whole - on food, food habits, food choices, body image, etc., with the common goal of producing a tablecloth: a material testimony of their own reflection.