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Bachelor's Thesis

**Chinese and Kenyan Food Culture-Information
for Health Care Personnel in Finland**

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<p>This study examines the food cultures of Asian and African countries in general. It concentrates on Chinese and Kenyan food cultures and compares the Chinese and Kenyan food habits with Finnish food habits as well.</p> <p>The contents are based on the results from an extensive review of the literature including articles, books and internet resources on this and related topics. The result of the literature review is affirmed by the results of group discussions carried out by the authors with immigrants and some Finnish people. The respondents for the group discussions (n=14) are from Finland, China, Malaysia, South Korea, Nepal, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Morocco. The purpose was to find out what food cultures exist in these foreign cultures and how they differ from Finnish food culture.</p> <p>The results of this study confirm that people living in different parts of the world have different eating habits which are determined by their culture, beliefs, people and geographic location. The results also show that when people move from place to place they take their culture along.</p> <p>The outcome of this project is a brochure which contains basic food ingredients and food habits of Chinese and Kenyan cultures. This information is made available to Finnish nurses with the aim of improving their understanding of foreign food cultures. Nurses need this knowledge to be competent in multicultural nursing which involves the comprehensive understanding of background, cultures and food preferences of people from various cultures.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The number of immigrants living in Finland has increased rapidly since the 1990's. According to Directorate of Immigration Finland, the number of immigrants permanently residing in Finland stands at 143256 in 2008. This takes into account only those immigrants who have permanent residence status. There are quite a large number of others who are on temporary residence or are waiting for their permanent residence permit application to be approved. With a total population of 5,333,496, the percentage of foreign residents is about 2.68%. These immigrants are from 173 different countries, Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Somalia and China being the most populous. (Directorate of Immigration 2008 [Referred 20 02 2009].)

The above statistical evidences show how multicultural Finland has become. When people move to places, they tend to move with their culture. It is a fact that eating habits of a group of people are a very important part of their culture. There are always differences in food cultures among immigrants from different countries and the food culture that exists in Finland. It is evident that every minority group has a distinctly different cultural life in terms of religious beliefs and customs, attitudes, priorities and expectations, and dietary norms. The last is perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of each cultural group, as eating and drinking are not only daily necessities, but also have social and health significance for people of all cultures and races. (Chan 1995.)

In a society that is growing fast multiculturally it is important that health care providers acquire good knowledge and information about foreign food cultures.

This project is designed to address this issue, namely; describing foreign food cultures, and making the information about foreign food cultures available for Finnish health care providers. This knowledge will consequently help the nurses in the health care facilities understand the immigrant patient under their care.

The information presented in this study is gathered using the literature reviewing method and group discussions with immigrants. To make the information presented in this project clearer, the general overview of food cultures in Africa, Asia, and Europe is discussed as the background work. Given the scope and broadness of societies and culture, it becomes imperative that in this type of study, only a few countries can be presented simultaneously so that the information presented can be concise and comprehensible. To this effect, the authors chose to narrow down the literature review and the content of the brochure to Chinese and Kenyan food cultures. Finnish food culture is also discussed to show how it contrasts and compares to Chinese and Kenyan food cultures.

1.2 Definition of Key Concepts

Immigrants are defined as people who leave one country to settle a permanent residence in another country (Foundation for Education [Referred to 05.08.2009]). When people move to another country, they tend to move with their culture. Culture which is defined as the ways of life of the members of a society, or of groups within a society, includes knowledge, belief, attitudes, art, morals, experience, hierarchies, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Whitehead 2003.) A nation will become diverse when more and more immigrants come from different cultures. As a part of health care service, nursing is no longer as in a simple way; a new conception, rather it is widening in scope including transcultural nursing, which is defined as the proper term for a formal, worldwide area of study and practice about culture and caring within nursing. (Wallace 2005.) People's health is related to food, which is any substance eaten to provide nutritional support for the body (MedicineNet [Referred to 05.08.2009]). Food culture of a society, in the context of this project encompasses what people eat as well as the ways in which the food is prepared and served.

1.3 Aim and Project Task

The aim of this project is to generate a brochure containing the information about Chinese and Kenyan food cultures. The brochure will be made available to nurses aiming to improve their knowledge and skills in understanding people coming from outside Finland.

To attain the aim mentioned above, a body of literature, including books, articles and internet materials describing what people eat and the eating habits that exist in foreign cultures in general and focusing on China and Kenya in particular.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Food Cultures around the World

2.1.1 Africa

Africa is so immense that it is not fair to generalize, but for the most part the main dishes of many African countries combine grains with legumes into a one dish vegetarian meal. Porridge is made from cooked starch that may be manioc (cassava), sorghum, millet, rice, yams, or maize, according to region, and served with a great variety of stews (sometimes called relishes) seasoned with tomatoes, onions, chilies, or other available vegetables. Peppers and other vegetables used in these stews mostly come from gardens cultivated in garden near the house. In most African countries, legumes are the primary source of protein. Meat, especially beef, is rare in the traditional diet. (Coetzee 1982.)

Concerning taste and seasoning of food in Africa today, a wide range of flavors are used, but chilies are the basic. Chilies are processed and used in different ways in various countries, for example, in Ethiopia it has a pungent smell and it is called berberé. In Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast, chilies are used to prepare sauce and stews and is referred to as piri-piri sauce and stews, while in Kenya and South Africa chilies are used to make curry. Pili-pili, a sauce made of chilies, onion, garlic, lemon juice, tomatoes, and horseradish, is used throughout Africa. (Andrews 1999.)

North Africa

North Africa refers to the countries located north of the Sahara Desert. They include Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Algeria and Mauritania. This region is inhabited by about 160.1 million people. This is the most homogenous part of Africa in terms of Language, religion and food culture. (African Development Bank Group 2009 [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Their choice of foods is largely influenced by their geographical location and religion. About 90% of the inhabitants are Muslims. The food here is mainly legumes, fruits, vegetables and grains. The use of meat is less and it is used to prepare stew with vegetables. They also enjoy spices and flavors which are achieved by adding crushed fresh garlic, chili peppers, salt, and olive oil. Bread is a very important part of every meal and a meal without bread is considered incomplete. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Despite the importance of bread, no other food can compare in variety of preparation and importance to the legendary couscous. It may be made from wheat, corn, barley, millet, green wheat, green barley shoots, or sprouts and even rice, tapioca, or bread crumbs. Couscous is usually served with vegetable stew. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

West Africa

The countries in West African are 15 in number. This includes countries such as Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone among others. The estimated total population is 266.9 million, in 2006. (African Development Bank Group 2009 [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

As in other regions, a wide range of staples are eaten in West Africa. These foods are mainly starchy made from cassava, maize, unripe plantain, yams and cocoa-yams which are boiled in water and pounded with mortar and pestle to a desired consistency of glutinous mass. This mass which is called fufu is served with a soup made from okra, fish (often dried), tomato, etc. In Ghana, fufu is eaten with light tomato soup, palm nut soup, groundnut (peanut) soup or other types of soups with vegetables such as nkontomire (cocoyam leaves). Soups are often made with different kinds of meat and fish; fresh or smoked. Rice is prepared with oil, vegetable and spices and it is called jollof rice. Milk and milk products are not common. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

East Africa

East Africa comprises of Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The population of this sub-region is 252.4 million constituting 27.3% of the African population in 2006. East Africa has an average population density of 2.3 per sq. km. (African Development Bank Group 2009 [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

The traditional cuisine of East Africa differs from area to area. The cuisine of cattle-keeping people in the inland savannah usually do not contain meat products because cattle, sheep and goats were regarded as a form of currency and a store of wealth, and are not generally consumed as food. In some areas, traditional peoples consume the milk and blood of cattle, but rarely the meat. Elsewhere, other people are farmers who grow a variety of grains and vegetables. Ugali which is the East African version of West Africa's fufu is made from Maize (corn). Ugali is a starch dish eaten with meats or stews. In Uganda, steamed, green bananas called matoke provide the starch filler of many meals. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Centuries later, the Portuguese introduced techniques of roasting and marinating, as well as the use of spices which turned the bland diet into aromatic stewed dishes. Portuguese also brought from their Asian colonies fruits like orange, lemon and lime. The British and the Indians brought with them their foods, like Indian spiced vegetable curries, lentil soups, chapattis and a variety of pickles. From their colonies in the New World, Portuguese also brought exotic items like chilies, peppers, maize, tomatoes, pineapple, bananas, and the domestic pig – now, all these are common elements of East African food. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Central Africa

Central Africa comprises the following 8 countries: Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe with a total population of 96.2 million people or 10.4% of the overall population of the continent. (African Development Bank Group 2009 [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Central African cooking has remained mostly traditional. Nevertheless, like other parts of Africa, Central African cuisine also presents an array of dishes (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009]). Plantains and cassava constitute the basic ingredients. Fufu-like starchy foods (usually made from fermented cassava roots) are served with grilled meat and sauces. The most traditional meats are those that are hunted in the forests. A variety of local ingredients are used while preparing other dishes like spinach stew, cooked with tomato, peppers, chilies, onions, and peanut butter. Cassava plants are also consumed as cooked greens. As in West Africa, groundnut (peanut) stew is also prepared, containing chicken, okra, ginger, and other spices. Another favorite is Bambara (porridge of rice), peanut butter and sugar. Favorite meat dishes are made from beef and chicken, Game meat preparations containing crocodile, monkey, antelope and warthog are also served occasionally. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

Southern Africa

The following 12 countries occupy the region of Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The total population in 2006 was 149.3 million or 16.1% of the continent. (African Development Bank Group 2009 [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

The cuisine of southern Africa is sometimes called rainbow because it represents a mixture of cultures such as African, Asian and European. The basic ingredients remain the resources found in southern African lands and waters. These include seafood such as crayfish, prawns, tuna, mussels, oysters, mackerel, and lobster. Fruits include grapes, mangoes, bananas and papayas, avocado. Meat products such as lamb and game like venison, ostrich, and impala. (Cuisine of Africa - Southern Africa 2009 [Referred to 22.11.2009].)

The Bantu speakers of southern Africa ate dishes of grain, meat, milk and vegetables, as well as fermented grain and fermented milk products, while the Khoi-Khoi ate meat and milk, and the San hunted wild animals and gathered wild tubers and vegetables. In many ways, Black Southern African families stick to the indigenous foods that their ancestors ate. The Khoisans ate roasted meat, and they also dried meat for later use. The influence of their diet is reflected in the universal (black and white) South African love for barbecue (generally called in South Africa by its Afrikaans name, "braai") and biltong (dried preserved meat). (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

A typical meal in a Bantu-speaking Black South African family household is a stiff, fluffy porridge of maize meal (called "pap," and very similar to American grits) with a flavorful stewed meat gravy. Before the arrival of crops from the Americas, the porridge was made from sorghum, but maize is much more prevalent today. (Food and Culture Resources [Referred to 20.02. 2009].)

2.1.2 Asia

Asia is the largest continent in the world in both area and population, which consists of many countries full of different cultures. Of course the way of cooking their food is different from one country to another. Asian Cultures each developed their own ethnic cuisine through the interaction of history, environment, and culture. Culinary historians and anthropologists identify three main categories of Asian dietary cultures that have developed through the centuries; there are southwest, northeast and southeast dietary cultures. For all the Asian food cultures, however, rice is the denominator, as persons in Asia may eat as much as 300 pounds of rice per person, per year. (Vaclavik & Christian 2008) Spices are a very important part of Asian cuisine. Usually, there are three meals in a day as the standard and the largest meal is the dinner (Katz & Weaver 2003).

Southwest Asia

Southwest style includes cuisines from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Burma. Flat bread is widespread, along with mutton, kebabs, and the use of hot peppers, black pepper, cloves, and other strong spices, along with ghee. Milk, which is mainly from cow, is prepared and consumed in various ways but the meat is not usually eaten. In addition, rice, wheat, barley and beans are also a staple part of the diet. (Le 2009 [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

Northeast Asia

The northeast dietary culture of Asia comprises China, Korea, and Japan. This Asian block use fats, oils, and sauces in their cooking and serving of food. In this food culture, people tend to use spices, soy sauce and seasonings in almost all foodstuffs. Also, they believe that some food can be used as medicines to promote health. In addition, food as symbolic offerings for northeast people, it provides a good way in enhancing communication and relationship with family, friends and other people. (Le 2009 [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

Southeast Asia

Southeast food culture includes Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. The traditional cooking style of this regions emphasis a delicate balance of quick stir-frying, boiling and steaming, supplemented with discrete spices and seasonings on aromatic and lightly-prepared foods. In addition, southeast people like fish sauce, along with galangal, lemon grass, and tamarind for additional flavor. (Le 2009 [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

2.1.3 Europe

Europe is the second smallest continent in the world, but European food is rich in variety, style and taste eliciting the regions lifestyle, flamboyance, exclusivity and prosperity. Variety and styles are as a result of a blend of many cultures, regions and ethnicities. Some of the major ingredients found in European food are red meat, sugary deserts, fat and refined grains. Meat is a very important component of food especially in colder regions like Finland. (European food- “origin of recipes”, [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

The proper dinner setting in Europe diet is known as fork, knife and spoon. The meal would consist of several courses including a soup or salad, an appetizer, the main dish, and a dessert. People like to enjoy a light music that serves as background as people converse with each other. (Western food and culture [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Scandinavia

Scandinavia is made up of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland. The people in these regions stick to their ancestor’s diets and habits. Potato is the most important and main food. Other ingredients include seafood, mutton, cheese, cabbage, apples, onions, berries, nuts, and bread. Preserved food are also very common in Scandinavian countries, which include dried, smoked, salted, or pickled fish; dried fruits and jams; and fermented milk. The climate favors the plentiful growth of forest berries including strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries in the summer. (Misra 2009 [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Scandinavians generally eat three meals a day with coffee breaks in between. Breakfast is light and usually includes bread or oatmeal porridge, eggs, fruit, herring, cheese, or potatoes. In lunch, bread and butter buffet tables is quite popular, which offers a large variety of both hot and cold dishes, and dessert is eaten last. Dinner usually consists of several courses, including appetizer, soup, entree, vegetables, and dessert. Popular desserts include pancakes, fruit pies, and pastries. Beverages served with meal include milk, tea, coffee, schnapps, beer, dry sherry, sweet Madeira, port, or aquavit. Scandinavians consume a lot of dairy products, which is from cows, goats, and reindeer. Cheese is generally served at every meal. (Misra 2009 [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Southern Europe

Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and southern France make up the region known as southern Europe. Due to the regions influence, the diet of southern Europeans differs from northern and eastern Europe. Muslim culture influenced the food traditions of southern Europe. Spices, lemons, oranges, rice, cane sugar and several types of sweetmeats were brought here by Muslims. Meals are based on grain products, such as bread, pasta, and rice. In addition, southern Europeans consume relatively large amounts of fruits and vegetables. Red meats, chicken, and eggs are used sparingly, but fish is very popular in this area. Nowadays, western fast food is becoming more and more popular. (Herbes 2009 [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Northern Europe

The countries of northern Europe include the United Kingdom of Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and France.

Generally, northern European diet consists of a large amount of meat, fish and poultry, accompanied by small side dishes of vegetables and starch. The diet is high protein from meat and dairy products, but has a low amount of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. (James 2009 [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Eastern Europe

Eastern European countries include Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine (United Nations Statistics Division [Referred to 20.07.2009]). The food culture in this region contains plenty fish and seafood which are from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the smoked hams and sausages from the unique flavor of the native juniper wood. The rich forests give them abundance of mushroom and the thriving dairy industry provides a high supply of sour cream and cream cheese. Fertile farmlands produce grains which are used in the production of large varieties of breads, noodles and dumplings. Eastern Europe recipe has been influenced by many cultures because the marriages of the nobility centuries ago brought the flavors of French, Italian, Russian, Turkish, Jewish and German foods to mingle with the food culture of this region. Sometimes it is hard to say which dish originated in which country. One thing common with both simple food and complex dishes in this region is that the ingredients are always simple. (Rolek 2008 [Referred to 20.07.2009].)

Central Europe

Central European countries include Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland (The World Factbook [Referred to 20.07.2009].) In Central Europe, there are certain universal ingredients common to all their cuisines, which include dried mushrooms, sour cream, poppy seeds, sauerkraut, smoked bacon and horseradish. For drinking habits, central Europe can be divided into three large zones; the southern area is largely wine-drinking; in northeast, including the Czech Republic and Poland in particular, people prefer beer. In the northwest, brandy and spirits are mostly consumed. For the nonalcoholic beverages, coffee, buttermilk, whey, herbal tea and light beer are popular in central Europe. In central Europe, during the summer time, they use three meals system, but in the winter, the trace of the medieval two-meal system, which include a light meal in the morning about 9:00 A.M. and an evening meal about 5:00 P.M. (Katz & Weaver 2003).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods used in this project are literature review and interview. This chapter describes what literature review and interview as research methods are and why they are important in health care.

3.1 Literature Review

A literature review is the all-inclusive study and explanation of books, articles and internet sources that relate to a particular topic. It can be used as the only method in writing a thesis or dissertation as well as a preliminary introduction to a topic in which other primary method of research such as interview is applied. Literature review is carried out to answer research questions by searching and analyzing relevant literature. (Aveyard 2007.)

With the help of literature review method, a large body of literature about a particular topic can be analyzed and summarized; this makes it easier for health and social care professionals to get access to concise and comprehensible information and knowledge on a particular topic of interest. This is important because no individual reader is able to consult all the researches made on a particular topic. Furthermore, literature review is important in uncovering new evidences and refuting controversies as well as encouraging objective thinking. (Aveyard 2007.)

Literature review can have different focuses and can be conducted methodologically in many different ways. Some reviews claim to be fully systematic with a strong focus on quality assessment of the selected research. A Systematic literature review strictly follows the path of a research question and finds the studies that address the question within the boundaries of a predefined exclusion and inclusion criteria. It is followed by an overview, interpretation and future implication of the findings. A general survey of the literature and a focused survey of the literature are two other more traditional forms of literature review. The two latter methods are more descriptive and narrative aiming at finding out what is known about a particular topic thereby forming evidence based theoretical background of a study. (University of The Highlands and Islands [Referred to 15.08 2009].)

3.2 Interview

Interview is a research method whereby questions and discussions with people are used as a way of collecting data, which would likely not be accessible using techniques such as observation and questionnaires. Like other research method, interviewing is open to a number of shortcomings such as biases and difficulties achieving reliable and valid results. (Blaxter 2006.)

While there are several forms of interview, the choice of interview form used by a researcher depends on the type of data required as well as on the availability of resources. Some of the forms of interview include structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured interview, ethnographic interview and focus group method. (Brewerton 2001.)

Interviews can be taken with audio or digital recorder or note-taking. However, recording may make interviewees anxious and less likely to talk about confidential information, and information can be lost if the audio tape dysfunctions. Secondly, recordings take long time to transcribe and analyze. The positive side of recording is that the interviewer can concentrated in asking questions and moderating the interview without distraction.

Note-taking can be distracting while the interview is going on, but it gives the researcher an instant record of the key points of the interview. This makes transcription and analyzing easier. (Blaxter 2006)

4. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review method used in this study is related to traditional review method which is more of a general survey rather than systematic review method. This method is chosen because of the nature of the topic of the study and the research questions which is aimed at understanding foreign food cultures. Therefore, searching the literature for information to answer this research question, the authors did not have to look for researches rather they searched the books, articles and internet resources that describe different food cultures, which include eating habits, food styles and content of food in China and Kenya. This chapter focuses on the findings of the literature review which forms the basis on the content of the brochure.

4.1 China

Chinese cuisine is a well established concept which attaches great importance to color, smell and taste of food as well as regional styles and flavors. Chinese food habits are based on vast territory and a long and unbroken history. This has given rise to diverse range and variety of regional flavors and styles. Although there are a number of regional cooking styles in Chinese lands, there still exist differences in many regional cuisines as some observers characterize those in the way of salty in the north such as Beijing; sweet in the south which is famous for the Cantonese cuisine; hot in the east, where the lands are watered by Yangtze River; and sour in west such as Szechwan and Hunan Provinces. (Chen 2006.) “Food is a gift from the lord”, is an old saying in China. Hence food and eating is very important because they believe that enjoying good food is not only good for health but also brings harmony and closeness to the family and relationships. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

4.1.1 Eating Habits

Food in China is a communal affair, Chinese people eat their dinner together with all the family members sitting around a table and each person will have one set of dining tool in front of them: pair of chopsticks, a bowl and a plate. Only the rice or buns are served individually. Everybody share the food dishes which were made and put in the centre of the table. It is polite in Chinese culture to greet each other while sitting down for a meal and wait for everyone to be seated before a meal can start. In some very traditional families, the most senior or elderly person at the table will take the first bite and only then, will the rest of the diners join in. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].) In the Chinese food culture, the meal usually begins with a set of several cold dishes which are followed by the main courses of hot meat and vegetable dishes. Staple food usually rice will be served at the same time with the hot dishes or can be served latter on. Soup is the last course. (China National Tourism Administration 2002 [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

4.1.2 Food

Chinese daily meals mainly consist of four food groups: grains, vegetables, fruit, and meat. To enrich their protein and calcium intake, they consume soy products such as soymilk and tofu. (Lin, 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

Table 1; Main ingredients in Chinese food

Starch staples	millet, rice, kao-liang, wheat, maize, buckwheat, yam, sweet pot
Legumes	soybean, broad bean, peanut, mung bean
Vegetables	malva, amaranth, Chinese cabbage, mustard green, turnip, radish, mushroom, Chinese leaf, spinach, celery
Fruits	peach, apricot, plum, apple, jujube date, pear, crab apple, mountain haw, longan, litchi, orange
Meats	Pork, beef, mutton, venison, chicken, duck, goose, pheasant, many fishes.
Spices	red pepper, ginger, garlic, spring onion, cinnamon

Pork is the main meat in China. Beef and mutton are also frequently consumed. Chicken and duck are not common, most often the ordinary citizen saw them at some special events. For Chinese Muslim, instead of pork, mutton is their favorite. (Katz & Weaver 2003.)

Staple food in China can generally be divided into 3 groups according to regions, those are: Rice in Southern and Eastern China, Wheat in Northern China and Sweet Corn in Middle, Northern and Western China. Because of the farming products of the region, the people living in Southern China consume more rice and rice products than northern people. Instead of rice, northern people tend to have bun, noodle, and pancake as their main food, which are made from wheat. People who are living on seaside and lakeside usually eat seafood or lake fishes in their meals. (Quick view to civilization of Chinese Food 1999 [Referred to 21.12.2008].)

Frying is the main method in Chinese style of cooking and plays a major role in many recipes, which may include deep, shallow, stir or slippery frying while popular Chinese fried dishes include noodles, fried-rice, chicken pieces and shrimp dishes. Other very common methods of cooking are sautéing, boiling, steaming, braising, smoking, and stewing. (Houston Chinatown 2007 [Referred to 30.01.2009]; Tagore 2008 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

In Chinese culture, people believe that in the universe exist a positive energy and a negative energy. These two energies should balance to create a harmonious and healthy state, otherwise, conflict and disease will be created. This belief is called "yin and yang" balancing. In this theory, "Yin" represents negative energy while "yang" represents positive energy. "Yin and yang" balancing theory is also present on food; people believe some food belong to "yin" and some food belong to "yang", which can affect peoples' health. Winter melon, bitter melon, watermelon, mustard green, Chinese green, water chestnut, Napa cabbage, bean sprout, mung bean, soybean, cilantro, cucumber, water chestnut, oranges, bananas, coconut, beer, ice cream, ice chips, grass jelly, clams, and oysters are ingredients that are believed to belong to Yin, and are also referred to as cold foods which can decrease the body's heat (lower the metabolism). They may cause stomachaches, diarrhea, dizziness, weakness, and coldness in the body if eaten in excess. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

Food Ingredients that are believed to belong to yang also known as hot food which can increase the body heat (raise the metabolism), are garlic, chili pepper, onion, curry, cabbage, eggplant, mango, pineapple, cherry, peanuts, turkey, beef, fried chicken, crab, shrimp, and pizza. Chinese people believe that unbalanced intake of these foods will cause skin problem such as rashes, hives, pimples, and nose bleeding, constipation, indigestion, and sore throat. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

"Yin and yang" also has a Geographical and climatic significance. People who live in the northern and western regions of China where the weather is cold and damp eat hotter and spicier food such as chili, onion, and garlic because they believe these foods will increase blood circulation and help get rid of the coldness and dampness. For the same reason people from the south consume milder, fresh and cooling food that are less spicy because they believe those food reduce the hotness and dryness of the body. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

Chinese patients always ask doctors about what food to avoid because of the conceptual framework on health and balance of the Yin and Yang. For example, certain food such as some seafood, beef, and eggs in the Chinese culture are asserted to be toxic or poisonous to individuals with weakened health. People who are suffering from skin problems such as dermatitis, acne or eczema and post-operative patients are often told to avoid these items. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

Chinese food therapy which is a practice of healing using natural food instead of medications, also known as Chinese nutrition therapy, is another form of food belief and health. It is particularly popular among Cantonese people who enjoy slow-cooked soups. One of the most commonly known therapy soups is rice soup that is also named congee or porridge. This is a traditional breakfast of Asian people all over the world. Congee recipe varies depending upon the desired health benefits as well as taste. (Lin 2000 [Referred to 30.01.2009].)

Other types of Chinese food therapy include: Concoctions and food made from meat or parts of animals not commonly eaten such as snakes, cobra meat, fried or made into soups are used to cure skin diseases, allergies and increase appetite. Meat of snakes made into flour or oil are used to cure burns, bruises from a fall, insect bites, wound that would not heal naturally, boils, itching skin and skin diseases. (Tan 2008.)

Another important aspect of “food and health” in Chinese culture is the Chinese medicated diet. This is a highly finished diet made from Chinese drugs, food and condiments under the theoretical guidance of diet preparation based on differentiation of symptoms and signs and traditional Chinese medicine. It has not only the efficiency of medicine but also the delicacy of food, and can be used to prevent and cure diseases, build up one's health and prolong one's life. It can be divided into eleven kinds: Fresh juice, medicated tea, drinks, medicated wine, decoction, medicated gruel, honey extract, medicated cake, medicated pancake, soups. (Hou 1994 [Referred to 30.01.2009])

The medicinal ingredients for medicated diet are usually selected from raw botanicals, they cannot be used directly but must be pre-processed and the odor is removed before use. According to the different conditions of individuals, however, to achieve the desired medical function, different medicines should be applied based on different physiological needs. (Cultural-china [Referred to 31.03.2009].)

4.2 Finland

Finland is the northernmost country in Europe. Finnish food is influenced by both climate and its location between Sweden and Russia.

4.2.1 Eating Habits

Finnish dinner settings commonly include fork, knife and spoon. Finns usually have three meals per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and two coffee breaks (around 10am and 15pm) and sometimes an evening snack (about 20pm). Breakfast usually consists of open sandwiches with butter, cheese or cold cuts. Porridge is also common in breakfast, which in Finnish is Puuro, made of rolled oats. Breakfast drinks are milk, juice, tea, or coffee; also some sour milk products such as yogurt or villi, which are usually served in a bowl with cereals such as cornflakes and muesli. Traditional Finnish food includes amount of grain, which grows abundantly in Finland lands. It is used in rye bread, many different kinds of porridge, mämmi and drinks. Other ingredients served commonly in the Finnish dinner table are potatoes, sausages, eggs, milk, butter, and vegetables. Traditional Finnish cooking is simple with little or no use of spices, but salt and pepper are the most commonly used spices in Finnish food. This gives to Finnish food a characteristic flavor. (Finnish food & Finnish food culture [Referred to 18.11.2009].)

Finns pay a lot of attention to the fact that food has to be fresh and free of germs. Claudia & Irja (2004) say that mastering all of the basic food safety rules is critical to avoiding potentially widespread morbidity and mortality owing to food borne illness. Food borne illnesses have always been a major threat to vulnerable groups such as the young, aged and the immunocompromised.

4.2.2 Food

Due to geographic location and climate influence, the lands produce abundance of potato, which is the main food. It can be cooked in different ways such as boiling, baking and mashing. Apart from potatoes, pasta and rice are also common in Finnish dishes. Typical meat dishes include meatballs, chicken, pork, beef, fish, reindeer and elk meat are also eaten. Common Finnish foods include dark bread and berries, potatoes, sweet pastries, sour cream, blins, fish, meat balls, buckwheat, sweetbread, Finnish beetroot (rosolli). Vegetables also play a major role as a component of Finnish foods. They eat a lot of salads which is composed of a variety of fruits and vegetables. (Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter 2008; Hedlund et al 2007.)

The seas and lakes provide abundance of fish and seafood resources to the country. Fish plays a prominent role in Finnish cuisine, such as salmon, zander, herring, and perch. Fish is staple and delicious whether eaten fresh, boiled, smoked, dried or pickled. Some very traditional Finnish food includes a special combination of flour with fish or meat, pies, and pasties. In the east they are called piiras or piirakka and kukko, which is a big pie with dough all around. Pirog is normally smaller than kukko, and if it is big, the filling is exposed with no crust on top. The filling in kukko may be meat, potatoes, cabbage, and turnips, but it was originally fish. In the west, along the coast, a similar pie had the name “herring cake.” (Katz & Weaver 2003.)

Christmas ham is another traditional and a main dish in Finland on Christmas Eve. It is often smoked in the sauna. In addition, the table holds sausages and the traditional oven-baked dishes in earthenware, called “boxes.” These boxes contain liver, potatoes, turnips, and so forth. This kind of meal is also typical for weddings and other big events. Dessert is a thick soup of dried fruits. Before this rich meal the Finns eat a hot lunch with lutefisk and rice porridge. In the southeastern part of the country, the pie will be on the table for Christmas. (Katz & Weaver 2003.)

Fast food is popular in Finland just like in other western countries. There are fast food shops on almost every block, as well as in cafes, service stations and supermarkets.

In Finland, sausage is the basic fast food for Finns. According to a saying 'A Finn is never too full to eat a bit more sausage'. Grilled sausage is served at every jazz, rock and other music festival, and at sports meetings, fairs and agricultural shows. (Global destinations Finland, Fast Food 2007 [Referred to 22.07.2009])

4.3 Kenya

Kenya is located in the east of Africa. As a result of long-time foreign settlement and colonization by the British, the food has been influenced by western culture as well as Indian, Arabs and Pakistani in taste, cooking and presentation. But the combination of the abundance of natural produce and the multicultural heritage makes Kenya become a great culinary nation. (Kenya Travel Guide 2009 & Kenya Food 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

4.3.1 Eating Habits

In Kenya, there is a wide variety of food reflecting the many different lifestyles of the various ethnic groups. (Kenya Travel Guide 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009]). For example, people in the inland of Kenya like to prepare simple food. To add some flavor, they fry the food with oil and onion. The coastal parts of Kenyan are more complex in preparing the food, and coconut as a flavoring is widespread. (Katz & Weaver 2003.) In western Kenya, people mainly prepare fish stews, vegetable dishes, and rice. The Maasai, cattle-herding people rely on the livestock products such as the animal's meat and milk. The Kikuyu and Gikuyu people grow corn, beans, potatoes, and greens. These People mash all of these vegetable products together and roll them into balls and dip them into meat or vegetable stews. (Food in Kenya 2007 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

Different from China and Finland, Kenyans use right hand to eat instead of chopsticks or forks and knives. A typical Kenyan meal usually contains a staple food, vegetables and dessert. The staple such as ugali or potatoes is served in the middle of the table so that everyone can reach it, and the dessert is usually fruit. (Food in Kenya 2007 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

Mandazi, a semisweet flat doughnut is generally what people eat for breakfast. It is served with coffee, tea or hot chocolate. Another traditional breakfast dish is called uji; millet based porridge similar to ugali, which is served warm with lashings of milk and brown sugar. Lunch commonly is meat, such as beef, goat, or mutton together with beans, corn and some fruit. (Lin 2008; Food in Kenya 2007 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

4.3.2 Food

Kenya has a rich supply of fresh food from the country's vast resources of farm lands, lakes and the Indian ocean that provide readily available vegetables, fruits and meats. The Kenyan dish ingredients are fresh, very cheap and make a quick meal plentiful and popular on Kenyan tables according to seasons (Kenya Food 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].) The most common foods include ugali, githeri (a mixture of maize and a pulse—that is, seeds of legumes, such as chickpeas, lentils, field peas, peanuts), pilau (spiced rice cooked with meat), and chapatti (fried bread). (Katz & Weaver 2003.)

Vegetables are often used as an accompaniment for main food in Kenya and are commonly served as a mixture. Some traditional leafy vegetables include baobab, cowpea, amaranth, vine spinach, water spinach, spider plant, jute, crotalaria, sweet potato, African nightshades, hibiscus, African eggplants, pumpkin, cocoyam, bean, and cassava; other vegetable include kales, cabbage, tomatoes, beans, potatoes, avocado etc. (Katz & Weaver 2003; Kenya food 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

Common meats for consumption are beef, goat, mutton, chicken, pork, some seafood. Fish is not as common as it is much more expensive. Adventurous meat eaters can also indulge in safe wildlife game meat such as crocodile and ostrich. These meats which are common in some specialized restaurants are rarely seen in home kitchen. (Kenya food 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

Kenya has a wide variety of tropical and fresh fruits including custard apples, mangoes, papaya, pineapple, watermelon, guavas, bananas, coconuts, tree tomatoes and citrus fruit. (Nenes 2009; Kenya travel guide 2009; Lin 2008. [Referred to 27.07.2009])

Tea is the official drink of Kenya; unlike other African countries, Kenyans consume a lot of tea and coffee. Some hot tea and hot coffee are often served with a meal. Some cold beverages such as soda, juice are widely available too. (Kenya Food 2009; Kenya Travel Guide 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].) Beer is the second favorite drink. Muratina is a common weak beer served in rural parts of Kenya. It is prepared from honey, sugar, or sugar cane and is named after the fermenting agent, the sausage tree fruit. (Katz & Weaver 2003.)

The traditional Kenya dishes consist of lamb, beef, pork, chicken, seafood, beans, rice, maize and potatoes. Herbs and spices are not common added in the food. But nowadays, the fast food such as pizza, burgers, roast chicken and steak spaghetti, French fries, pasta, has rapidly developed in Kenya. (Kenya Food 2009; Kenya Travel Guide 2009 [Referred to 27.07.2009].)

4.4 Summary of Literature Review

As shown on the table below, the findings from the literature provide good information about food cultures existing in China, Finland, and Kenya. As mentioned earlier, the food style of a culture is certainly first of all determined by the natural resources that are available for its use, (Chang 1977), this theory clearly supports the evidence that people tend to consume the main food which grows in their lands. The literature review shows that the food consumed in different studied regions (China, Finland, and Kenya) differ considerably in ingredients. In addition to the differences in ingredients, every culture tends to have their own way of preparing the food, for example rice can be found in every part of the world, but, the way it is prepared and serviced is different from culture to culture. The table below shows the food cultures of China, Finland and Kenya discussed under the main themes; Main food, Eating habits, Cooking methods and Food beliefs.

Table 2. Summary of Chinese, Finnish and Kenyan food cultures

	Finland	China	Kenya
Main Food	Potato, sausage, rye bread, fast food, chicken, fish, pork, beef, milk , and cheese	Rice, vegetable, pork, mutton, beef, fish, wheat products, chicken, milk, and eggs	Rice, yams, ugali, vegetables, fish, meat, fruits and milk.
Eating Habits	Settings: Fork, knife and spoon. One plate per person and less spicy.	Settings: chopsticks, spoon; Share dishes spicy food	Settings: hands, spoons; One plate per person less spicy
Cooking Method	Mainly boiling, baking, mashing, frying, smoking fish	Mainly frying, boiling, steaming, salting, braising	Food is prepared mainly by boiling, steaming, frying fry, and smoking
Food Beliefs	No literature was found.	Yin, yang balance food therapy medicated diet	Watery foods are given to sick people for quick recovery

5. THE INTERVIEWS

In this study, focus group discussions are used as a method of data collection. According to Brewerton (2001), the focus group method is described as a discussion-based interview that produces a particular type of qualitative data. The method aims at getting closer to the participants' understandings and perspectives of certain issues. For the purpose of this study, this method is appropriate because it encourages an open and in-depth discussion about food cultures of the respondents.

The interview setting is informal; the authors explain the purpose of interview to the respondents and how their responses will be used in the study. Authors use open-ended questions and encouraged the interviewees to feel free in this conversation. The group discussions took place in three sessions. Each session lasted about 30 minutes. A location for the interviews was chosen which is convenient for the respondents. In choosing the location, the authors put into consideration the privacy and comfort of the respondents.

The respondents were 14 in number; 5 Africans from Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroun, Ghana and Morocco; 4 Asians from China, Malaysia, South Korea and Nepal; and 5 Finns. The immigrant respondents have lived in Finland for at least 2 years.

The group discussion sessions were organized in such a way that all the three authors of this project were present. One of the authors played the role of the moderator and two of them were note-taking.

5.1 Questions for the Interviews

The questions below are used in the interview:

1. What type of food do you eat in your home country?
2. In what ways do you cook these foods?
3. What kind of dinner settings do you have when you eat?
4. How many meals do you have in a day and what are the components?
5. What do you feel about Finnish food since you move to Finland?

5.2 Interview Findings and discussions.

In the group discussions, the questions listed above were used as lead questions to guide the conversation so that the focus and the themes of the discussion are not lost. The aspects of food culture frequently highlighted at the discussion were eating habits, type of food and cooking styles. The findings of the interviews are discussed below according regions; Africa, Asia and Finland.

Africa

During the group discussions, the respondents from African countries including Cameroun, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco and Nigeria, gave a very good description of the food cultures in their countries. From the results of the discussions it was found that the cuisines of Cameroun, Ghana and Nigeria are very similar in content. The staples are starchy foods made from root vegetables like cassava, Yams, cocoa yam. The main differences come in the method of preparation.

In Ghana for example, Fufu can also be made from plantain while in Nigeria and Cameroun, plantain is boiled and eaten with vegetable. Milk and milk products are not common in the three countries, while meat is used in stews and soups for serving the starchy staples.

Our respondent from East African country of Kenya on answering our question said that their main food consists of maize (made in different ways). There is long tradition of consumption of milk and milk products such as sour milk. Chapatti which is flour of whole grain durum wheat mixed with water and salt is widely eaten. It is served with lentil soup, vegetable curry, chicken and mutton curry dishes, and pieces of the chapatti are used to wrap around and pick up each bite of the cooked dish. They also eat fried meat and fish.

According to the respondent from Morocco, the food style of the countries of Northern Africa is similar, partly because of the fact that 90% of the population of the region is Muslims and partly because of their historical origin.

He said that bread is a very important part of every meal in North Africa. Their staple food is couscous. While couscous can be found in the shops in different forms and preparations everywhere in the world today, he acknowledges that those in the shops cannot be compared with the traditionally prepared couscous of Morocco. Couscous is served with vegetable stew and meat or chicken. The couscous is steamed in the same vessel where the meat is cooked. He also added that in Morocco there is wide range of spices and chilies. Pork and blood dishes are not eaten in Morocco.

The African respondents were given the opportunity to relate how they feel about Finnish food. Some of their responses are quoted below.

“Finnish food is healthy, but unfortunately lack taste”

One added *“ Finnish food are not attractive to the eyes”*

“Presence of too much fat and creams”

“There is not enough chili”

Asia

The Asia food cultures were represented in the group discussion by respondents from China, Korea, Malaysia and Nepal. Speaking about their staple, all of them mentioned rice as their main food and that it is eating almost every day. According to them, the commonest way of cooking rice is boiling and it is usually served with other dishes e.g. vegetables and meats. The common meats for them are chicken, beef, pork, fish and lamb. Vegetables and meats are prepared by frying and boiling. Apart from rice, they also consumed noodles and different type of soups but not as often as rice. Concerning flavors and taste, it was observed that all the countries represented prefer tasty food and used a lot of spices in making their food.

The difference comes when talking about dinner settings; Chinese and Koreans use chopsticks and spoons as their main dinner sets, while Malaysians prefer using their fingers.

There are also similarities in the meal times for the Asian people as noted from the discussions. They usually have three meals in a day. The breakfast comes between 6am to 8am depends on personal habits. The common breakfast may include milk, porridge, soup, bread, rice, noodles and eggs. Lunch time is around 12am and they usually have rice and some vegetable and meat dishes. For dinner, people again eat rice and other options for example soup, noodles or some porridge and the time is around 18pm to 20pm. If they feel hungry they may have some snacks between these three meals.

Although the cuisine and eating habits are similar in most Asian countries as noted above, there stills are differences. China has multi-food culture, different area of China has different cuisine, but generally speaking, Chinese people like to fry food same as Malaysia and Nepal but Koreas prefer to mix and cook food. Chinese people like porridges for breakfast and dinner, those porridges are usually made from rice, millet, beans or corn but usually but Malaysians do not have porridge in the dinner.

When asked how they feel about Finnish food, they acknowledged that Finnish food is good for health as it is hygienic and contains a lot of vegetable salads. On the other hand, they said, Finnish food does not contain enough spices. Another shortcoming is that it has too much cheese, butter and cream which are rarely used in their traditional food, not only they do not like the flavor, but also they think that the presence of too much fat undermine the healthiness of Finnish food.

All of these interviewees admitted that there are some beliefs in food and recovery in their cultures. One common belief among them is that they usually give chicken soup, fish soup sometimes mixed with some herbs to people who are suffering from disease or who underwent surgical operation. They believe that those foods have restorative functioning that can help patient to recover faster.

Finland

There were five participants at the group discussion with the Finns. Four among them have been able to experience the difference between Finnish food and African food in that they had recently been in Africa, so they were able to speak more, comparing their experiences from their travel.

From the results of the discussions it was found that potatoes and sausages are the staple in Finland. Then there was the rye bread which was very important. For breakfast, people eat porridge bread and drink coffee or tea. During lunch which comes about 11 am, they eat potatoes or pastas together with salads. Rye bread could be eaten almost in all meals, as it goes well together with all meals like soups and stews.

All the participants emphasized the importance Hygiene in Finnish food habits. This is important in the production, storing and serving of the food. It was realized that the number of meals eaten in a day varied from people to people according to their employment and lifestyle. Those employed and with very busy schedules ended up eating two meals in a day; while others who are less busy could eat four times in a day.

5.3 Reliability and validity

The reliability of the interview result of a study depends on the authenticity and completeness of the information received from the interviewees which will rely on the amount of trust the interviewees have on the researcher and the ability of the researcher to accurately transcribe the data collected (Brewerton 2001). The trust of the interviewees in this study is won by establishing a rapport between the interviewees and the researchers. Secondly, an atmosphere which insures privacy is chosen for the discussions so that the interviewees can feel free and give an in-depth description of food culture and eating habits in their countries. Contributing to the truthfulness of the respondents is the fact that generally immigrants are enthusiastic to speaking about their culture which they find totally different from the Finnish culture.

The method of data collection is another aspect that adds to the reliability of this study. During the interviews which are organized as informal group discussion sessions, there were three interviewers and two of them are mainly taking the notes. This ensured that no relevant data was lost.

Generalization of the interview result is the part that is compromised owing to the number of foreign respondents (n=9), representing nine different countries in Africa and Asia which is limited. The respondents acknowledged that in their countries there are several regions and ethnic groups with deferring food cultures and eating habits. While the basic content of food seems to be the same in many countries, the differences are seen in the ways the food is prepared and served. Therefore the result of the interview cannot be confidently generalized for each country involved in this study. Nevertheless, there is some measure of validness which is evidence by the similarities seen when the result of the interview is correlated with the result of the literature review.

5.4 Ethical Consideration

The interviews were in the form informal discussion sessions. It is anonymous. The participants were assured that their response and answers are used only for the purpose of the study and are not attached to their identity or personal data. The participants were assured anonymity and confidentiality before the sessions began. The purpose of the project was explained and the location where to find the final result of this project was disclosed. Taking part was totally voluntary and anybody can quit the discussion at any stage without having to give any reasons.

5.5 Limitations

Concerning the literature review, difficulties were encountered finding substantial and reliable information from the books and articles especially for the Kenyan food culture. For this reason, the authors resorted to several websites for articles and publication and these internet publications may not be totally reliable. There were not enough studies done respecting the “African food habits”, therefore this study have limited sources in this aspect.

Secondly, it was challenging to find a convenient time to meet with the respondents for the group discussions due to personal issues and schedules. These circumstances to some extent affected the duration for completing this study.

Though the implementation of the project progressed steadily from the start to completion, some setbacks were encountered owing to the fact that it is a group work by three students with different backgrounds and experiences.

6 THE BROCHURE

The brochure, which is the outcome of this study, contains the summary of the result from literature review and group discussions. It is meant to give basic but important information about the dietary patterns and food cultures of Chinese and Kenyan societies. This brochure is made available to nurses with the aim of improving their knowledge in transcultural nursing.

6.1 Purpose of the brochure

The purpose of the brochure is that it will provide the description of various food ingredients, food habits and food beliefs that exist in Chinese and Kenyan cultures. Nurses can read it to improve their knowledge and understanding of Chinese and Kenyan food cultures so that when they are in the position to care for such people, they can deliver nursing care that is sensitive enough putting into consideration the culture of the foreigner. This knowledge will help the nurses improve their understanding of the foreign cultures hence improving the nurses' competence in multicultural nursing and thus promote the wellbeing of immigrants in Finland.

Furthermore, when an immigrant in a health care facility knows that the nurses understands something about his food culture, he will feel more secure and relaxed, this will in turn enhance the establishment of rapport and therapeutic relationship between the nurse and the immigrant. Granted though, it may not be possible to provide the immigrant with his choice of food, it is important that the nurse is able to talk about the immigrant's food culture and how the available food differs from patient's preferable choice. The nurse can also explain what steps the facility is taking to ensure that immigrant patients can get food similar to what they are used to.

6.2 Limitations of the brochure

This brochure has obvious limitations, for example it presents the food cultures of only two countries out of about 173 different countries represented in Finland. Furthermore, the fact that culture is dynamic and people's way of life can change due to migration, culture infiltration, urbanization and changes in lifestyle, the content of this brochure is prone to becoming outdated with time. Nevertheless, it is perceived to be useful to the nurses because they need an understanding of the various cultures present in Finland.

7 CONCLUSIONS

“Multiculturalism” is seen as a word “many cultures” in Finland. The immigrants moving to Finland experience a great change of environment, a new life structure to which they have to adapt. (Dalen Järvinen& Saario 2008) As this study has shown, eating habits is one of the aspects of people’s identity that are deeply rooted in their culture.

The group discussions as well as the literature examined in the process of implementing this project have opened an overview about the different food patterns and habits that exist around the world and how people from different parts of the world value their culture and food habits. People are so firmly attached to the food pattern and eating habits that they move along with these habits even when they know that they are moving for good. These immigrants find it difficult to adapt to new environments and culture.

The immigrants tend to conserve their culture and habits as far as possible. They can be helped not by trying to change their habits, but by helping them cope with the changes they encounter. It is a general knowledge that health and wellness to a great extent depend on the food we eat and how we eat. People’s food patterns and habits therefore, is important for them from social, culture and nutritional point of view. And these aspects play a big role in the state of individuals mind and body.

As mentioned earlier, the number of immigrants in Finland is steadily increasing, so the number of cultures represented is also increasing in diversity. The food cultures of these immigrants, which have been shown to be important to them, need to be taken into consideration. This concerns especially health care workers who on a daily basis encounter these foreigners and need to take care of them holistically.

This study only concentrates on the food preferences and eating habits of immigrants from China and Kenya. Obviously more studies are needed to explore the food preferences and eating habits of people from other parts of the world. Secondly, whether changes in diet which occurs when people move to Finland have health consequences is a topic for further research.

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