Normative scripts in nutrigenomics and their social implications

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content

• Prominent script in nutrigenomics: three assumptions on health
• Philosophy and Health and Good life
• Daily Life and Health and Good life
• What is Good life? Healthism, anxiety, personal responsibility
• Science and ethics
• Conclusion
Prominent script in nutrigenomics

1. Health = disease prevention through food–gene interactions
2. Health = minimisation of quantifiable health risks by the ‘right’ food choice
3. Disease prevention = individual responsibility for food choice
   - Minimising personal risks through tests or belonging to a risk group and eating the right stuff
Health script in everyday life

• Health: positive, feeling good
• No obsession for health, no health freak (= disrupting solidarity)
• Social, conviviality
• Food ≠ knowledge
• Food is identity, social, pleasure, caring
Health in philosophy: Good life

- Health: well being balanced with other duties (Aristotle, Kant)
- Personal responsible for health as a condition for doing good (Kant)
- Time scale: between past, present, future
- Food: multiple functions: identity, social, cultural, pleasure, health
Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why such a large part of humanity, even long after nature has liberated it from foreign control (naturaliter maiorennnes), is still happy to remain infantile during its entire life, making it so easy for others to act as its keeper. It is so easy to be infantile. If I have a book that is wisdom for me, a therapist or preacher who serves as my conscience, a doctor who prescribes my diet, then I do not need to worry about these myself. I do not need to think, as long as I am willing to pay.
No aligning nutrigenomics and daily life

• Reaction of Nx-scientists:
  – Consumer: more information, more knowledge
  – Healthier products: eating more fish products
• Food ≠ knowledge
• Advices: fish oil: in salad? Depletion of fish resources?
• Do only consumers have to change? Should science not produce knowledge / information better applicable in daily life?
Re-aligning N\textsuperscript{x} with daily life

• Other scripts:
  – Public health
  – Embedding health in taste and culture
• Social acceptable research priorities
• Incorporating end user panels in genomics research trajectories
• Only recommendations of food intake when accompanied by social research of its successful applicability
Science and ethics

- Ethics outside science: green/red traffic light
- Ethics inside science
  - More fruitful integration of science and society
  - Identifying negative effects
  - Embedding science without moral pain
- Comparing scripts of science with that of ethics / daily life ethics
- Looking for bridges
conclusion

• Better interaction between science, ethics, daily life
• Better research priorities
• Better products
• Better = More social applicable knowledge / information
• Why should only consumers change?
• Why doesn’t science listen to end users?
Based on:

- Komduur, R., Molder, H. te, Korthals M., The role of genes in discussions about overweight: an analysis of talk on genetics, overweight and health risks, forthcoming