Food in educational as field of pedagogical experience alimentation in initial education as a field of pedagogical experience

Abstract

This article presents the results of the systematization of the experience carried out in the Inti Foundation Huasi: Casa del Sol, Waldorf institution, located in the town of Teusaquillo, in Bogotá. The systematization of experience as an inductive process raises a reflection on the practice within its natural context, in a bid to make visible the learning that strengthens the proposal of education of children as part of a pedagogical perspective that integrates food by resignifying its value to human development as one of the fundamental axes that allow the transformation of welfare and learning conditions. The results of this research are structured in action, meanings and conclusions.

Keywords: food, early childhood education, child development, pedagogical practice

Introduction

The problem is much more complex. Food is not exclusively a biological, nutritional, medical phenomenon. Food is a phenomenon, in addition to social, psychological, economic, symbolic, religious and cultural in short, in the broadest sense of the term. The Inti Huasi Foundation: Casa del Sol from its visionary practice and positions food as a transversal axis linked to the educational process of children. His practice based on Waldorf education considers work around food for developing children and initial education one of its main strengths. The Casa del Sol recognizes that its pedagogical actions are consonant with the comprehensive approach to early childhood that is projected from a human rights perspective and makes the place of food based on human rights within international normative instruments visible (art. 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). According to the forms of action that today the foundation performs around food, underlying pedagogical intentions whose origin is found in the anthropological thought created by Rudolf Steiner. Among them stand the redefinition of the relationship between man and food as a source of multiple opportunities for human development and coordination of qualified care and the enhancement of development, considering that happen simultaneously and are not possible one without the other? To achieve this end, the Casa del Sol in its pedagogical practice approaches food from different perspectives in relation to human development: food as a fundamental need, as a right and its role in the development of capacities and potentials when making visible the fact of that the links between food and the Human beings unfold beyond the organic, as a network that crosses multiple spheres of development.

Methodology

This experience’s data with specifically within the framework of systematization of experiences in early childhood education and specifically positions the feed and initial education as a field of teaching experience, which from practices built enters as opposed to traditional tensions between care and education, among them: the understanding of care from a mechanical perspective of basic satisfactions; the imaginary ones in front of the low educative level that the agents in charge of the care and education of the babies require and the undervaluation of children’s own activities. This research as a dialogical, participatory and active process raises a reflection that does not establish a priori categories and that is the result of an inductive methodology based on the data, within its natural context, in order to reflect on the practice and recognize learning. That can strengthen the initial education proposals.

Results

The collective reconstruction of experience

The pedagogical experience in the initial education of the Inti Foundation Huasi: House of the Sun on the construction of the relationship between the human being and food in early childhood extends from 2006, in a nine-year journey to date. In 2006 a first group of seven families interested in an education different from the traditional one recognize in the Waldorf pedagogy an echo of their way of thinking. Distinguish their interest in the welfare of their children and their relationship with health, nature and healthy eating as a constant concern. From the hand of the teacher Lucía Correa Pachón, the first group of study of pedagogy and anthropologic thought began. In 2007, what started as a seed with a small group of families undertakes a new challenge, that of growing. In this search they agree to buy a garden in operation. There, his way of thinking about food found its first confrontation, in a garden made up of a group of families for whom food was not a priority; evidence of this was the low consumption of fruits and vegetables, consumption of liquefied foods, lunch boxes made up of industrialized packages and products. Questioned by the initial interest and avoid as the Waldorf pedagogy, teachers decide how to relate in a different way with food by appropriating cooking. By welcoming new families, they recognize their habits and carry out a process of agreements. As part of that concern to improve the eating style ritual born as the layout, thanks to receiving the food. This time between 2009 and 2010 is characterized by diversity; new families seeking a different...
education feel that they are a possibility with the Waldorf pedagogy in the Foundation Inti Huasi. The year 2009 was highlighted by the entry of indigenous, vegetarian and foreign families, who made their contribution in the construction of the relationship of the human being with food. The foundation decided to make a radical change: together with the change of plastic utensils by slab, new foods were included, including cereals, which begin to work hard due to the analysis of the study group, for example, quinoa, amaranth, barley and oats, also accompanied by new recipes. Despite the financial difficulties, the slogan from the beginning to work on healthy eating persists and the dynamics of sustaining quality versus the economy is an institutional slogan. As a validated Waldorf project, the Foundation receives visits from international teachers assigned to its accompaniment. In 2009 he received the visit of the teacher Inés Spittler, teacher of garden teachers. The emphasized during his visit focused on the importance of nutrition, the importance of cereals and chewing process.

In 2011, the external views as a source of questioning are multiple, a time that the teachers call “ bittersweet “: on the one hand, they have visits from the pedagogy for the process of endorsement and accompaniment to the project; On the other hand, there are the visits of government institutions responsible for inspection and monitoring for compliance with standards line amienos and early childhood education. A new growth, as a result of their effort, occurs when families attract new families. Institutional growth demands the hiring of new human talent, in this case the kitchen staff. S u n and imposes a new challenge to convey the expertise built by the teachers in this space, defining new processes for these staff. The constant training of human talent strengthens the understanding of practices and their impact on the well-being of children, including those related to food. Teachers attend national and international training is the med including the role of food in different stages of development. Initially, the visits to monitor compliance with the regulations on initial education provoke questions and, at first, apparent weakening of the constructed; the pedagogical reflection allows to take up the principles and practices and strengthen them. However, his eyes are analytical and critical of the rules and dialogue with them as interlocutors from the practice. With this learning, the work of 2015 was undertaken, a time when o ogres from the reflection provoked by external views, which define new processes, but which consolidate the focus on food as part of the institutional identity in a reaffirmation.

Knowledge

The sense of the pedagogical practices for the construction of the relation between the human being and the food is based on two types of knowledge that is constituted in the daily life. The first type refers to transversal knowledge that, by permeating all pedagogical practices, constitutes a fundamental part of the meaning of this relationship; among them are the conceptions, intentions and knowledge coming from the pedagogical model. However, this article emphasizes a second type of knowledge that, although it can be inferred from the former, allows us to deepen and resignify the role of food in the enhancement of human development.

Transversal knowledge: The House of the Sun, in accordance with the principles of an education towards freedom, establishes the precepts and conceptions that are part of the pedagogical project, based on anthroposophy and Waldorf pedagogy. They are concepts about being human, human development and childhood that are part of the construction that sustains the pedagogical actions: Anthroposophy describes a structure of man and beings of nature, according to which the human being would be made up of a physical body, an enteric body (the force that gives life, that shares with the plants), an astral body (the ability to feel, which it shares with animals) and the self (the upper layer of man that corresponds to the ability to think). Consider the reformed human being, physically divided into three major systems, each of which corresponds to different psychic qualities: thinking, the nervous-sensory system, the feeling, the respiratory-circulatory and the willing, the metabolic-motor. The conceptual construct of human development is part of the understanding of the intentions and forms of action that constitute the Waldorf pedagogical model. Steiner defines development as a biographical journey in which each subject traverses every seven years stages of transformation - septenios - in the physical, psychic and spiritual spheres. From the perspective of needs, this development is closely related to nature and the satisfaction of the needs that stem from it and that Steiner calls “true needs” given its relationship with the quality of life and well-being.

The childhood vision of the Inti Huasi Foundation is a construction that intertwines the individual and the collective. D intro of his conception highlights the cultural perspective, in which childhood is the result of certain economic, historical, social and cultural processes. Childhood is considered a social construction beyond the biological fact, in which the child is a participant in its own construction, which systematically influences the society that surrounds it. The Casa del Sol proposes a horizon of meaning that correlates human, child and community development, by envisioning and structuring a process of joint construction that recognizes and guarantees the rights of children in the present, but which, in turn, builds their actions in his vision of a future construction of society. The interest of a group of families for what they called in the beginning “an education different from the traditional” is consolidated through various intentions that are part of the pedagogical project today.

In the Casa del Sol, attention is given to the need of the child as a priority and respect for biological rhythms in the organization of daily life that adapts to the needs of children and their evolutionary characteristics. Rudolf Steiner emphasized the importance of constructing educational actions in accordance with the evolutionary development: “During the first seven years, the vital forces in the child are focused on the construction of the physical body. The physical body constitutes the primordial tool for the later developments - psychic and spiritual “. The understanding of the relationship between the human being and nature constitutes the platform on which he structures his thought and work. To strengthen the relationship of the human being with the environment, he recognizes in the food chain a chain of actions that clearly represents it. Pedagogical principles allow carefully engage health, education and human development, medicine and education as a pillar is its educational philosophy. The rhythm as a system that allows the gear between man and nature represents the way to focus the vital forces towards the optimal development of the physical body. Within his vision, the focus of the pedagogical and social work in the first seven years is to provide the necessary conditions to configure the “rhythmic man”; behind the daily actions are enclosed the healing forces that allow the organic and physiological configuration of rhythmic man through everyday life.

In the educator, as an early childhood worker, a diversity of competences is mobilized. On the one hand, it is a resource available to children in order to mobilize their sense-making skills through their action and attitude. On the other hand, he is a reflective professional who deepens in the comprehension of what happens and of the way of...
learning of the children. To accompany the children during their feeding the Teacher must develop his sensitivity as his main tool; your attitude is part of a psychic preparation that allows you to prepare for a delivery time.

Knowledge that allows resignifying the role of food: The pedagogical construction has made it possible to visualize knowledge that fills with senses the relationship between human beings and food as opportunities for human development. García and Radigrán highlight the educational and therapeutic opportunities of food in relation to communication: (...) in the life of any child, food is an important moment (...) food may cease to be one of the few moments in which we can interact with our children, to become another moment of haste and incommunicado. This is educational opportunities that give us the basic need for food. The movement is present at feeding times. From the birth, the human being is able to make effort: and I continuous movement through its jaw allows the extraction of breast milk. What initially is a reflex (of suction) progressively constitutes a muscular training of prefrontal activities (chewing and swallowing, among others) as part of the development of the muscles necessary to articulate speech and facilitate the acquisition of language. Suction, swallowing and chewing (...) are the movements that allow us to prepare the coordination, strength and agility necessary for the development of speech in the child (...) in a process of motor maturation of their phonoarticulatory apparatus 44.

La Casa del Sol highlights the role of food in the face of strengthening the will, this is how it avoids the consumption of processed products such as fast foods (nuggets, hamburgers, hot dogs, French potatoes) due to its consistency and flavors, although they facilitate the consumption by children (by taste, by habit, by fashion), they decrease the chewing processes, which facilitates the path of consumption and displaces other foods of better quality and that due to their lower processing require a greater effort, in which they also strengthen the individual doing through chewing. In this regard, Vygotsky, in his study on the development of higher psychic functions, describes the place of the will as “a general psychological trait (...) that constitutes its differential characteristic with respect to all other psychic processes. All these processes are processes of mastery of our own reactions with the help of various means”. The Waldorf pedagogy centered on the child as an integral being, with will, feelings and intellect, takes advantage of the active will of the child when using imitation as a means.

The development of autonomy and self-care is also visible at this time, through the use of real objects. The child in this process builds his independence thanks to the organized experiences that stimulate his contact with plates, spoons and knives whose dimensions and dangers are authentic. The feeding allows a progressive acquisition of autonomy by the child through their active participation. The satisfaction of food as a basic need allows the consolidation of affective bonds and the development of feelings of self-confidence in an everyday exchange that generates the deployment of communication and the construction of meanings in relation to the child’s understanding of the world. Through binding experiences the child expresses his emotions and recognizes his feelings.

The healthy diet, in the words of the teachers of Inti Huasi, “is not only what I see, but what I give the child, it has to do with a good preparation, a good presentation and a healthy accompaniment”. Acting in coherence, they design and implement pedagogical practices to achieve: that adults and the environment act as protective filters; recognize the source and production system for food selection - giving privilege to organic, fresh and whole foods; the maximum before administering the nutritional value of foods; the consumption of the food respecting its original flavor; recognize the meaning of the senses in this stage and apply it in everyday life; simultaneously involve the child as a constructor of self-care; accompany and properly guide children at the time of feeding. Part of the accompaniment must start from the recognition of the acquisition of habits as a process, which distinguishes stages of transition. The influence through the style of feeding is essential in the construction of adequate habits. Osorio, Weisstaub and Castillo define eating behavior “as the normal behavior related to eating habits, the selection of foods that are eaten, the culinary preparations and the quantities ingested of them”.

In humans, the ways of feeding, preferences and rejections towards certain foods are strongly conditioned by learning and experiences lived in the first five years of life. In general, the child incorporates most of the eating habits and practices of a community during early childhood. The mother has a fundamental role in education and the transmission of dietary guidelines to the child; however guidance and accompaniment must be emphasized according to the particularities of each child and their family. Teaching to eat implies a path that requires an approach that integrates health, nutrition, culture and education. The anthroposophical vision analyzes different factors around this process, such as the quality of the food; trends in food production and their effects on food quality and human health; the protection of healthy instinct; and the social role of institutions, families and the environment.

Forms of pedagogical action

The knowledge gives meaning to a set of forms of action that, from pedagogical reflection, together with the principles offered by the Waldorf pedagogy, allow both the construction of the healthy relationship between man and food and the incorporation of other intentions.

Work with families: Through a first meeting, in a personalized space, a dialogue is established between the expectations of families and the educational proposal of Inti Huasi. In this first contact, mutual recognition becomes part of a process planned to work hand in hand. Healthy eating is an essential topic to address, since it allows you to recognize your place - from the beginning - as a structural axis of the pedagogical proposal for the development of your children. Building meaning around food is a process that has been strengthening every year in Inti Huasi. There, food is a subject that requires institutional and personal commitment and their experience allows them to recognize problems and ways of working. In addition to this, there is a natural complementarity with family experiences, in which the actions of parents constitute educational actions, which become more and more powerful every day.

The pedagogical reflection: Recognizing and making visible the place of practices around food has been the result of a critical and rigorous pedagogical exercise. Being coherent with postulates and pedagogical principles in everyday practices means focusing reflection on the well-being of the child and, therefore, on their needs. For this, it is essential to mobilize action plans, putting the construction of meaning before other discourses, such as administrative and economic ones. The planning of times. The planning of eras is the strategy in which convergence of intentions, reflection and pedagogical activities. Within the pedagogical project different periods are established and
in each one the themes of the activities are proposed. Steiner develops a theory of education that promotes learning the meaning of things within a rhythm of everyday life. Like the Waldorf schools, the Casa del Sol develops all activities through a rhythm that is related to the events of the universe.

The care as a ritual: In the postulates of the Waldorf school, rhythm is visible as a cosmic gear between care and everyday life. In each moment of care, the satisfaction of the basic needs that allow survival, mixed with signs and signs resulting from the interaction between care and caregiver, converges. But care can be lived in diametrically opposed ways and that is where the distance between routine and ritual lies. L’ Ecuyer, for example, describes the risk involved in a meaningless routine and defines it as “the repetition of useful, structured, sometimes timed and supervised acts”. In Inti Huasi feeding times are set as “rituales” full of possible meanings and symbols from sense built on the latent value of each meeting.

The sensory experience: Teachers promote experiences that involve the use of food. Recognize that organoleptic characteristics provide a wide range of possibilities as sensory stimuli during early childhood. Thus, the food can be observed by the child in all its extension and his recognition compromises all his senses. The Waldorf pedagogy highlights the role of sensory experience as a source of learning in the first seven years.

The representations: in the Waldorf pedagogy play a fundamental role related to the meaning of existence. For Steiner, the pictorial quality is present in the soul of the child and through his fantasy allows him to recreate images that mobilize the understanding of his relationship as an individual man with the universe. The narrations, the songs, verses and finger plays on food are regular representations and whose background is part of the sense of food within the man-nature relationship. The images of the man incorporated in the great universal all comport for Steiner a prevalent place in education.

Imitation: plays an important role in the child’s learning process, helps to recognize their qualities as a person and leads them to reach levels of development. Vygotsky makes a call to recognize imitation as a complex process and, likewise, to overcome the mechanical intellectualist view that could occur on it. Emphasizes the importance of imitation in the development of higher psychic functions as (...) one of the fundamental ways in the cultural development of the child (...). The imitation process itself presupposes a certain understanding of the meaning of the action of the other [and that] by itself is a complicated process that requires prior understanding (...) imitation is only possible in the measure and in the ways it is accompanied by the understanding.

Imitation as the second “law of childhood” enunciated by Steiner takes a leading role as a form of pedagogical action within Waldorf schools “With the power of imitation is learns, ‘assimilated’ impressions of the environment”. Among imitation forms are distinguished: example worthy of imitation and household activities. The figure of the teacher, according to Steiner, must be “a model worthy of being imitated”. Two are the magic words that indicate how the child has to enter into relationship with the environment and society: imitation and example. Aristotle called man the most worthy of being imitated among animals; for no age this statement is more valid than for childhood before the second dentition: the child imitates everything that happens in the surrounding physical environment and, by imitating, its physical organs structure their permanent forms. In this regard, the Inti Huasi Foundation, specifically in pedagogical practice, considers the role of imitation and example tools for building the healthy relationship between man and the child’s food. For the teachers of Inti Huasi being the example at the time of feeding has involved a long journey that commits them to “be more aware of what it means to feed”; it is an exercise of coherence in which the teacher educates with her action: “I educate with what I do”. Home activities are another key tool, since there, through imitation; the daily tasks of adults are replicated and can be seen as “a kind of game”. Based on this, the anthropological principles offer, within the pedagogical tasks, “a wide repertoire of pictures for imitation”, among them the homelike activity, which, related to human activity, must become a qualitative experience full of meanings. For children doing, play and motivation are coupled in these experiences configured for imitation. This allows children to experiment and connect a chain of actions and events with their everyday life. For example, food preparation, like a classroom project, makes children understand that their actions are part of a specific goal. Other authors, such as Dewey, explain from their perspective the multiple potentials of this type of activity, which they call practical activities more concrete of life itself (Figure 1).

![Figure 1 Reframing the role of nutrition in education initial as pedagogical experience.](image)

**The game:** It is precisely through the game that the child has the opportunity to interact with their environment. The child finds the opportunity to apprehend the world and express himself. It then becomes the central activity of his work and how to interweave the elements of life as he experiences it. Steiner clearly extolled the role of the game as an enhancer of healthy childhood development. In Waldorf schools children can play with various resources, especially those offered by nature, including food. They recreate with the work of the elderly, to the extent that they reproduce their experiences. Dicho task thus becomes “a kind of game” and to be transforming the work with their imagination and fantasy or participating in it. For example is the kitchen, which is assumed to be one of the pedagogical corners. In this space they have the opportunity - through free play - to play roles that mimic what adults do.

**Senses and meanings of food and feed**

Dahler et al., opposite the modernist discourse quality understood as “part of the Cartesian dream of certainty” related to the “pursuit of definitive and universal criteria”, pose a speech creation of meaning, which involves dialogue as part of the ethics of the meeting. The senses and meanings constructed by children, families and human talent of the foundation Inti Huasi are the result of an interactive and dialogical process. Pedagogical reflection focused on the welfare and development leverages the philosophical and theoretical tools founded on the pedagogia Waldorf as arguments that enrich the questioning and reflection. The complex of scientific and spiritual

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vision is to Steiner commitment to integrate across multiple fields of knowledge to transcend as the basis of an action in all areas in daily life. Rudolf Steiner coined the term “vitaeshopia (subiduria of life)” in their quest to bring science to the realities of life, temporal events, through the principles anthroposophic. Steiner integrates three fields of knowledge and relates each developmental stage-healing medical human development: pedagogical-educational and agricultural-food. The vitaeshopia is an ongoing dialogue with practical life. For food, this dialogue represents the principles link with each own events in the food chain, which Steiner called food doctrine anthroposophic. The principles anthropologic intend to address food especially from a qualitative approach, without ignoring the traditional quantitative nutritional approach. That way practices that account for consistency and defined the commitment in every action.

At Casa del Sol, the principles anthroposophic are argumentative tools that allow questioning and mobilization against the practicalities of life - including food -. In the work of resignificar and construct meaning in everyday life, anthroposophy becomes the tool that supports the challenge to the dominant discourses quantitative and additionally promotes reflection for the production of discourses underlying pedagogical practices. The food chain itself establishes a form of relationship between man and all living beings. Food being connected with nature and the relationship is undergoing much of the sense of what we are. Resize the role of food and food as a connector within a new process of understanding the relationship of human beings as part of nature and humanity and its significance for development represents one of the principles of anthroposophy as “nutrition and evolution hidden.” This relationship is even more evident today when we are part of a globalized world and interdependence is even greater. Basic consumer decisions affect people who may be distant, ECISIONS that are part of everyday life within a connection as world citizens. For l to Casa del Sol, cultivate “the sense of what we are” is part of his work.

Irene Comins describes the sense of the value of care, states that the tasks of attention and care are central to human development: “The tasks of attention and care are necessary to satisfy the basic needs of every individual are essential for survival and welfare. They are therefore considered important for human development and for the existence of social justice”. In addition it emphasizes that this is not the only thing that makes them important: “Attention and care provided by themselves the need for affection and emotional support that all human beings have. They are the best proof of the recognition that all human beings need”. A new relationship emerges. From this perspective, children learn to engage in the world through the experiences. The educator accompanies, guides and proposed as part of a consensus that children participate in the discussion, reflection and analysis. Reflections and questions of children generated by experiences at Casa del Sol are recognized as valuable approaches for mobilizing their understandings about the world around them. The anthropological view of power favors social relations. The commensality is how food is shared and from anthropological studies is a prime location for physical and social reproduction of individuals and groups now. Thus, cultural relationship with food, in their preparations, conservation methods and medicinal utilities and how they are shared knowledge and intentions contain constituting part of our identity.

Conclusion

Pedagogical experience of Casa del Sol recognize the relationship of humans with food as a necessity that transcends biological and mechanical Mink food and redefines its role in the cultural and social practices. Food is a social construct than disciplinary principles to settle in everyday daily practices, in which the food complies with multiple symbolic roles. Similarly, it recognizes in them that early childhood is timely and decisive stage for building healthy eating habits and privileges this construction from a viewpoint transdisciplinary. The process committed to families and the community has led to the construction of forms of action aimed at enhancement of child development. Its historical tour exposes the relationship of humans with food as an integrated construction that mobilizes understanding of meaning in three instances: first, the relationship between humans and nature - from which the food -; the second, the relationship with others through social and cultural practices in which food plays different symbolic roles - what we are, what we think -; and ultimately, ourselves. Thus, the relationship with food through different environments makes a visible the way of being and being in the world around us.

The educational project defines an institutional commitment to building dialogic that are part children and their families, in the hands of teachers and human talent of the Foundation. From there, the place of food as part of their pedagogical construction, based on the recognition of the special features is recognized and whose teaching resources are strengthened by the principles of philosophy anthropologic that characterizes the institutions Waldorf. Daily practices related to food at Casa del Sol, in addition to relying on the pedagogical principles Waldorf, used as a resource for reflection questions from Rudolf Steiner applied to changes in the food production system; to place food in human development from biological, physiological and quantitative perspective; the relationship between health and education and his vision of a according to the child ‘s needs education. Today, faced with the economic and social dynamics of globalization and food homogenization, which promote the consumption of foods whose attentive processing the health and the human development and commitment to sustainability and respect for the environment, it is essential to define minimum parameters protection in terms of power, acting as a “filter” for the construction of the relationship between humans and food. Thus, from early childhood, should ensure the rights of children to health, to be educated to health, to adequate food and a healthy and sustainable environment.

The quality of food should be considered a participatory and contextualized building, the fruit of knowledge, products and own food culture of each community, which, along with nutritional theories, allow children, families and institutional human talent to recognize the intentions and foundations that they maintain, modify or change their daily feeding practices, taking into account the selection, conservation, preparation and consumption of food as part of their cultural identity. Food and nutrition education in the context of early childhood education should be resigned to expand its meaning. You must build their practices based on the recognition of the needs, the features and the particularities of the communities and substantiate through participatory development processes that integrate knowledge and intentions. They must accept theories as sources of reflection and questioning and not as unquestionable truths.

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The collective construction and the empowerment of families and human talent of the foundation are the strengths that have enabled overcoming various difficulties during the course of its existence. Difficulties economic, cultural and relational, which once generated crises, are sources of reflection and building solid foundations for the pedagogical work around food. Such difficulties as part of their history allow consolidate its identity in Bogotá as an institution with a collective construction of pedagogical for the relationship between humans and food practices. Beyond philosophies or pedagogical currents, the elements and the characteristics that emerge from this experience can be a source of reflection for the construction of new forms of educational action contextualized allowing resignificar place food for human development and in different areas the educational.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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