Bryan A. Brown                         Watch their diet or watch men riot                          4/30/15

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 ***Proposal***:

The topic that I have chosen to write about for my I-Search paper is the percentage of inmates with mental disorders and how their diets have played a role in their mental status. I have chosen to write about this because I'm combining to issues that are very closely related to me. I have many people in my family and know of many people who have, at some point in their lives been incarcerated. I am in no way saying that they didn't deserve to be incarcerated. They did the crime, which means that they have to do time. What I cannot comprehend is the fact that the overwhelming majority of individuals who are not getting the help that they need because they are busy filling the cells for those actual criminals. They are more of a danger to themselves than to others, which is why the prison suicide rate is so astronomically high. The intent doesn't matter as long as the actions that got that person locked up are substantiated with proof. The other issue intertwined with my topic is the diet of the said individuals. Upon thought, one would believe that it is common sense that the body (or in this case the brain) cannot function to its utmost capacity without the proper nutrients and minerals that it needs. Yet this side of person's physical physiology that many health professions rarely, if ever, take into account. Poverty and malnourishment go hand-and-hand. You can almost not found one without the other. My research supported my claim for the most part, expect minor discrepancies. Many of the mentally disturbed came from humble beginnings to say least and I do not believe this to be a coincidence. My main method of information gathering was the internet.
***Process***

 Much appreciation must be credited to the internet for conception of my essay. When I first tried to amass information, I wanted to use the library as my main source of data. Unfortunately to my dismay, my topic(s) had an abundance of stuff (the books that is) that made it difficult to concentrate my essay. It become too tedious so I changed my strategy and decided to strictly get info from the internet or from word of mouth from people who have been through what I am talking about in the paper. One thing that I found useful for refining what I'm looking for through the many articles and links on the internet, I made care to be very specific about what I needed. I used key phrases such as, "foods that cause mental illness", " "Percentage of inmates that suffer from mental illness", and lastly, "dispelling poverty myths".
Rao, Sathyanarayana, T.S., and “Understanding nutrition, depression and mental illnesses"
***Paper***
            A young man lays with his back on his bed. He is in a confined space, a cell no bigger than 20x20 feet. He is engulfed in an abyss, nothing but darkness embracing him. He is locked away for 23 out of 24 hours in a day. It’s been over a week since the last time he has been out. He can’t tell when it’s night or when it’s day, only the random times he is let out his cell. Time flows slowly expect when he is released so that he perform his ADLs. A perpetual pungent smell reminds him that the cell possibility hasn’t been cleaned since its unholy conception. Worst of all for him, it’s as if he just woke one day and here he was, which makes the experience all the more terrifying.

 What he does know at least is that this misery has no end in sight. He tries to get answers from the rare interactions he has with individuals but all they do is stare at him, call him crazy, and give him strange pills and scarps for some type of nourishment. Nourishment that, in a way, could have saved him from himself or dulled his afflictions that perturbed him so well that it lead him here. What I am writing about is a person that I have no affiliation with, only a script that I have seen on television. However, these scripts are based on true stories.

  A growing number of research reports suggest that a poor diet is a contributing factor for an inmate’s mental disorder, which may have played a major role in their very incarceration. The main mental disorders that I would like to focus on are the ones that law abiding citizens deal with on a day-to-day basis, some that we don’t, and some that we don’t even know that we may be suffering from: Anxiety, and or mania (anxiety can be a low-grade form of mania *or* a symptom of mania, as well as depression [Hantouche, Akiskal, Lancrenon]), and depression. Before I talk about these mental disorders and the certain diets that may stimulate them, it is appropriate to talk about the prison populous represented by the mentally ill.

Prisons and jails are overpopulated and overstressed from the constant addition of new prisoners. The mentally ill represent a surprisingly large number of those said new additions. Research suggests that many individuals incarcerated suffer from mental illness. According to the Bureau of Justice Statics Special Report on “Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates” (James, Glaze), at midyear 2005 more than half of all prison and jail inmates had a mental health problem, including705,600 inmates in State prisons, 78,800 in Federal prisons, and 479,900 in local jails. Mental health problems were defined by two measures: a recent history of symptoms of a mental health problem, if they occurred within a 12-month span prior to the interview, and a recent history of mental health problems including a clinical diagnosis or treatment by a mental professional (James, Glaze).

More than two-fifths of State prisoners (43%) and more than half of jail inmates (54%) reported symptoms that met the criteria for mania (James, Glaze). About 23% of State prisoners and 30% of jail inmates reported symptoms of major depression (James, Glaze). An estimated 15% of State prisoners and 24% of jail inmates reported symptoms that met the criteria for a psychotic disorder (James, Glaze).  Mentally ill patients also suffered from very low rates of employment and high rates of illegal income among inmates who had mental problems (James, Glaze). These facts are significant because many of these inmates lived well below the poverty line simply because of the truth that once a person gets incarcerated because of a misdemeanor (depending on the nature of the crime) or a felony, it becomes very difficult for a business to trust that individual, which in turns makes it a difficult dilemma for them to found employment anywhere. As a result, these people will get and do whatever they can to feed themselves and their family (It is important to note that the change in-times also dramatically affected diet and activity, as the poor were much more active in earlier years and food was not yet processed [institute for nature healing]).

Inmates that were unfortunate enough not to know anyone well off had the herculean task of making ends meet and because the dollar spreads much longer on unhealthy calories than healthy calories, artificial food was usually on the menu. Numerous studies show that low-income adults are more likely to be overweight than those of greater means.

The image above depicts a chart that shows the percentage of adults that are obese, with the percentage treading down as the income increases. Even though I could not found the research that shows exactly how many prisoners represent the “<$25,000”, I’m sure their numbers are an inconvenient truth to anyone who founds out.

Contrary to what many people may or may not believe (if they ever thought of this), the problem the poor (specifically inmates) once faced was under-nutrition but in our era, the problem is over-nutrition of the wrong substances. The unrestricted access to processed food may contribute to depression and anxiety (mania). Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss interest (google). Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease. Mania is a mental illness marked by periods of great excitement, euphoria, delusions and overactivity (google). There are 7 main substances that have been shown to contribute to these conditions (Borchard): Refined sugar, such as candy (Borchard); artificial sweeteners, such as NutraSweet or Equal (Borchard); Processed food, such as white bread, cereal, pasta, or snack foods (Borchard); Hydrogenated oils, such as fried chicken, fried chicken, fried cheese sticks, and French fries; Foods high in sodium, such as hoagies, some chips, and canned soaps (Borchard); Alcohol; and Caffeine. The most tragic issue about this is that major corporations are making money at the cost of people’s lives, futures, and families.

***Ponder***

This topic was very fun and very interesting to me and I enjoy working on it. What inspired to do the paper was watching the Food matters documentary and also looking out my own window and seeing the devastation processed food is having on my community, combined with the main issues the citizens in my community are dealing with. Overall, waiting to the last minute never works but it more finishing, not just writing it in one sitting. What worked most is actually being interested in what you are writing about. A lot of times in different classes I had to write about something that I really never cared about and this usually lead to me becoming extremely demotivate me in completing the assignment. With the I-search paper however, I got to choice what I wanted to write about and that truly made it a lot easier for me. The only question that I really want answered is why is there so many people in prison?

***Work Cited***

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