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*Editorial*

# Cassava porridge and their nutrition and composition

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## INTRODUCTION

Cassava (CAS) porridge has low energy density and may be a poor source of several nutrients. Its energy density and nutrient composition is generally improved by blending it with other flours. The aim of this study was to work out the effect of hydrothermally-treated (HTT) ragi on nutrient composition, sensory attributes and starch digestibility of cassava porridge. It has higher protein, fibre, lipid and mineral content than cassava flour. The high  $\alpha$ -amylase activity of HTT ragi permitted the number of CAS-HTT flour to be raised from 9.5% w/v to 19% w/v without altering the free-flowing drinkable consistency of porridge. Partial substitution of CAS with HTT ragi had no effect on starch digestibility and tannin content but increased the phytate content of CAS-HTT porridge. Hydrothermally-treated ragi masked the aroma and colour of cassava leading to dark-coloured CAS-HTT porridge with a bitter taste. Cassava is a crucial source of dietary energy for many people in Sub-Saharan Africa [1]. Cassava flour is employed to organize porridge, which is a crucial food for infant nutrition and a refreshment drink for other age groups. Despite its high starch content, cassava porridge may be a poor source of dietary energy because the high water-binding capacity of cassava limits the quantity of flour (10–14% w/v) required to organize porridge with acceptable semi-liquid consistency. The energy density of African porridges is generally improved by fermentation or with the help of

diastatic malt. Carboxylic acid fermentation with a pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* enables the quantity of flour to be increased to 14–17% w/v. Fermentation with natural starter culture consisting of carboxylic acid bacteria and yeast enables the quantity of flour to be increased to 15–26% w/v, whereas a mixture of natural starter culture and diastatic malt allows the quantity of flour to be raised to 30–35% w/v when preparing porridge. The quantity of flour required to organize porridge also can be increased to 30% w/v by adding diastatic malt to gelatinized porridge. The viscosity-reducing effect of starter cultures in porridge is attributed to the acidic environment and amylases produced by the microorganisms whereas diastatic malt exerts its action through amylases that are synthesized and activated during grain germination. Malted grain is widely used as an ingredient in food processing in Africa to form beverages and infant foods. Ragi malt is formed by steeping clean grains with water after which they're spread on with wet jute bags and covered with an equivalent. The covered material is sprinkled with water regularly and left to germinate at temperature for 3–4 days after which it's dried and milled. The high amylolytic activity of germinated grains limits the quantity of malt (usually about 5–10% w/v) which will be used to prepare porridge. This suggests that nutritional benefits of malted grain, like high starch and protein digestibility, and low phytate and tannin content is restricted by the number used to prepare porridge.