

Traditional Foods, Modern Risks: Evaluating Glycemic Load and Index in Ghanaian Diets

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Abstract

As Ghanaian society becomes increasingly urbanized, traditional diets are undergoing rapid transformation without corresponding updates to nutritional risk assessments. A persistent problem lies in the assumption that indigenous foods are inherently healthy, despite the potential for high glycemic responses linked to processing methods. There is a critical research gap in quantifying how staple foods such as Akple, Gari, and Yakeyake affect glycemic control. This study investigates the GI and GL of these traditional foods with the objective of informing evidence-based health interventions. The main research question guiding the study is: To what extent do traditional Ghanaian cassava-based foods contribute to glycemic burden among consumers? Findings indicate that while cultural familiarity with these foods persists, both Gari and Yakeyake are classified as high GI and GL foods, potentially contributing to metabolic health risks. This research highlights the need to reconcile cultural food practices with modern health knowledge and to promote preparation methods that mitigate glycemic effects.

Keywords: cultural nutrition; food processing; glycemic response; health risk; traditional diets.

