Nutritional Composition of Crackers Produced from Blend of Sprouted Pigeon Pea (*Cajanus cajan*), Unripe Plantain (*Musa parasidiaca*) and Brewers’ Spent Grain Flour and Blood Glucose Level of Diabetic Rats Fed the Biscuit

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**Abstract**—The nutritional composition and hypoglycaemic effect of crackers produced from blend of sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain was investigated. Crackers were produced from different blends of sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain. The crackers were evaluated for proximate composition, amino acid profile and antinutritional factors. Blood glucose levels of normal and diabetic rats fed with the control sample and different formulations of crackers were measured. The protein content of the samples were significantly different (p<0.05) from each other with sample A having the lowest value and sample B with the highest value. The values obtained showed that the samples contained most of the amino acids that are found in plant proteins. The levels of antinutritional factor determined were generally low. Administration of the formulated cracker meals led to a significant reduction in the fasting blood glucose level in the diabetic rats. The present study concluded that consumption of crackers produced from this composite flour could be recommended for the diabetics and those who are sceptical about the disease.

**Keywords**—Crackers, diabetics rat, sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain.

I. INTRODUCTION

Crackers are usually defined as biscuits, which are all more or less unsweetened, salty, thin and crisp and refers to products with very low sugar and fat content. In Nigeria, biscuits constitute a popular cereal food consumed by the young and the old. Some of the reasons for such wide popularity are low cost compared with other processed foods, good nutritional quality and availability in different forms, varied taste and longer self-life [1]. They are ready to eat, convenient and inexpensive food products, containing digestive and dietary principles of vital importance [2]. Diabetes remains one of the leading causes of death and disability in many countries in the world, including Nigeria. Several multiple risk factors act both independently and jointly. Among dietary factors, amount of starchy or sugary food and type of fat intake in the dietary play important roles in determining risk of diabetes [3]. It was recommended that low carbohydrate diet should be taken by people suffering from diabetes. Type 2 “Adult Type” (Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus), which occurs in elderly people is treated by controlling the diet and oral hypoglycaemic drugs [4].

Addition of legumes such as germinated pigeon pea in the daily diet has many beneficial physiological effects in controlling and preventing various metabolic diseases such as diabetes mellitus and coronary heart disease [5]. Plantain (*Musa paradisiacal*) is an important staple food in Central and West Africa. According to [6], over 2.11 million metric tons of plantain is produced in Nigeria annually. However, about 35 – 60% post-harvest losses had been reported and attributed to lack of storage facilities and inappropriate technologies for food processing [7]. The use of plantain flour for production of baked goods if feasible would help to lessen our total dependence on imported wheat.

Brewers’ Spent Grain (BSG) is the major by-product of the brewing industry, representing around 85% of the total by-products generated [8]. It has received little attention as a marketable commodity, and its disposal is often an environmental problem. Nevertheless, due to its relatively low cost and high content of protein and fibre (around 20 and 70% dry basis, respectively), it can be of value as a raw material for manufacture of flakes, whole wheat bread and biscuits [9]. BSG is too granular for direct addition in food and must first be converted to flour [10], [11].

The aim of this study was to determine the nutritional composition of crackers biscuits produced from blend of sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain and assess its hypoglycaemic effect in vivo, so as to estimate the feasibility of applying these crackers as a healthy diet for preventing and managing diabetes.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Dried Red variety of pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajans*) and matured green plantain fruits (*Musa parasidiaca*) were purchased from Ogbete Main Market in Enugu, Nigeria.
Brewers’ spent grain was purchased from Nigerian Breweries Plc 9th Mile Enugu, Nigeria.

**A. Preparation of Germinated Pigeon Pea**

Pigeon pea seeds were sterilized by soaking in 1% sodium hypochloride for 20 min prior to steeping. The grains were thoroughly washed and steeped in water for 6 hours. The steeped grains were spread on wet jute bags, covered with a cotton cloth and left to sprout at room temperature (28°C) for 72 hours. Germinated seeds were dried in a GallenKamp oven (BS model OV-160, Manchester, UK) at 50°C for 24 hours. Rootlets and shoots of the grains were separated from the grain (kernels) by rubbing off the germinated grains before milling and sieving through 100µm mesh sieve. The flour was kept in an airtight container at 4°C prior to use.

**B. Preparation of Plantain Flour**

The mature green plantain fruits bunch was cut into individual fruits, washed, peeled and cut to approximately 2mm thick using stainless steel knife. It was then soaked in 0.03% sodium metabisulphite solution for 20 min, dried at 65°C for 48 hours before milling using disc attrition mill, and sieved through 100µm mesh sieve. The flour was kept in an airtight container at 4°C prior to use.

**C. Treatment of Spent Grain**

The spent grains were treated to remove residual sugar and alcohol using the method of [12] with slight modification. 150g of brewers’ spent grain (BSG) was made into a suspension, to which the other ingredients and the composite flour were then added and kneaded to form smooth dough. The dough was proofed for 2 hours in a proofer (Bakbar E 81, New Zealand), followed by sheeting to 1.0mm thickness using a dough sheeter (Esmach, Italy). The dough was then cut into squares measuring 3cm x 3cm and ‘docked’ prior to baking at 160°C for 20 min. Crackers made from 100% wheat served as the control.

**E. Production of Crackers from the Composite Flour Blends**

The crackers were prepared according to the modified method of [13]. Formulation of the crackers was stated in Table II. Yeast was mixed with water (25°C) to form a suspension, to which the other ingredient and the composite flour were then added and kneaded to form smooth dough. The dough was proofed for 2 hours in a proofer (Bakbar E 81, New Zealand), followed by sheeting to 1.0mm thickness using a dough sheeter (Esmach, Italy). The dough was then cut into squares measuring 3cm x 3cm and ‘docked’ prior to baking at 160°C for 20 min. Crackers made from 100% wheat served as the control.

**F. Determination of Proximate Composition**

The moisture content, crude protein, fat, crude fiber and carbohydrate content of the crackes were determined as described by [14].

**G. Determination Amino Acid Profile**

The amino acid profile of the crackers was determined using modified method of [15].

**H. Determination of Antinutritional Factor**

The Tannin, Oxalate, trypsin inhibitor, Saponins and Flavonoid were determined as described by [16].

**I. Animal and Diet**

Adult wistar-albino rats weighing between 150g – 200g purchased from the Department of Animal Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria were used in the experiments. Prior to the experiments, rats were fed with standard food for one week in order to adapt to the laboratory conditions, in their individually and partly restricted metabolic cages. (16 hours before the administration of the crackers, they were fasted overnight, but allowed free access to water. Five rats were used for each group of study.

**J. Induction of Diabetes**

Diabetes mellitus was induced by a single interperitional injection of ice-cold alloxan monohydrate freshly dissolved in normal saline (2%) at a dose of 180mg/kg body weight [17]. Single intraperitional injection of normal saline was given to animal in the control group. After 7 days, the fasting blood glucose (FBG) level of test animal was measured and only rat in the control.

**K. Experimental Design**

Thirty rats were divided into six groups, each consisting of five rats.
Group 1. Normal control, rats were non-diabetes induced, fed with normal feed rat/ control sample A

Group 2. Rats were diabetes induced, fed with normal feed rat/ control sample A

Group 3. Rats were diabetes induced, fed with sample B

Group 4. Rats were diabetes induced, fed with Sample C

Group 5. Rats were diabetes induced, fed with sample D

Group 6. Rats were diabetes induced, fed with sample E

After four weeks of feeding, the blood was collected and the animal decapitated. The study was performed in accordance with the International Guideline regarding animal experiment.

L. Determination of Blood Glucose Levels

Blood glucose concentration (mg/100ml) were determined using a glucometer – elite commercial test (Bayer), based on the glucose oxidase method. Blood samples were collected from the tip of tail after 16 hours fasting with free access to water. The blood sugar level was determined on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th week of the experiment.

M. Statistical Analysis

Data was subjected to analysis of variance using the statistical package for social science (SPSS), version 15.0. Results were presented as mean ± Standard Deviations. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparison of the means. Differences between means were considered to be significant at p<0.05 using the Duncan multiple range test Values are average of triplicate experiment ± standard deviation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Proximate Composition

The result of proximate composite of sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain crackers obtained from different proportion of composition flour blends are presented in Table III. The moisture content of the crackers samples ranged between 3.14% and 4.99% with Sample A having the highest value. The low moisture content of crackers suggests that they will be generally free from microbial spoilage thereby ensuring longer shelf life.

### TABLE III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>Moisture (%)</th>
<th>Protein (%)</th>
<th>Fat (%)</th>
<th>Ash (%)</th>
<th>Fibre (%)</th>
<th>CHO (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control A</td>
<td>4.99 ± 0.11 a</td>
<td>10.12 ± 0.04 c</td>
<td>3.84 ± 0.00 a</td>
<td>2.01 ± 0.03 a</td>
<td>2.11 ± 1.13 a</td>
<td>76.93 ± 0.21 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4.91 ± 0.21 b</td>
<td>15.34 ± 0.12 a</td>
<td>4.11 ± 0.01 b</td>
<td>1.49 ± 0.11 b</td>
<td>4.01 ± 0.41 b</td>
<td>70.14 ± 0.04 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4.01 ± 1.11 b</td>
<td>13.01 ± 0.04 b</td>
<td>4.35 ± 0.11 b</td>
<td>2.08 ± 0.21 c</td>
<td>4.21 ± 0.21 c</td>
<td>72.34 ± 1.11 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3.20 ± 0.02 c</td>
<td>13.92 ± 0.11 c</td>
<td>3.91 ± 0.04 d</td>
<td>2.11 ± 0.14 c</td>
<td>4.32 ± 0.32 d</td>
<td>72.54 ± 0.02 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3.14 ± 0.03 c</td>
<td>12.11 ± 0.21 c</td>
<td>3.43 ± 0.21 d</td>
<td>2.01 ± 0.13 a</td>
<td>3.09 ± 1.12 a</td>
<td>76.22 ± 0.03 d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values are expressed as mean ± standard deviation. There is no significant difference between data bearing similar superscripts (p>0.05).

The protein content of the samples ranged between 15.34% to 10.12% with Sample A having the lowest value and sample B with the highest value while the carbohydrate content of sample B is the lowest in value. The high value of protein contents in sample B could be attributed to the highest value of sprouted pigeon pea it contained. It has been reported that protein can be supplied to food by supplementing non-leguminous food with legumes since most leguminous plant seeds are rich in digestible protein with good array of amino acids. Wheat bread provided other samples. This is expected, as lysine was the first limiting amino acid in cereal-based products. Wheat bread provided less than 20% of the recommended amount. This result is in agreement with [25] who published “a lack of lysine in cereals”. Generally, the amino acid composition is higher in Sample B than other samples. This might be because the protein content of legume-based food is higher than that of cereal based food [24].

B. Amino Acid Profile

The results of amino acid compositions of the crackers samples are presented in Table IV. The values obtained showed that the samples contained most of the amino acids that are found in plant proteins. It was observed that the amino acid composition of the crackers samples increased as the percentage of sprouted pigeon pea supplementation increased. The values obtained from Sample A that contain only wheat is lower than those obtained from other samples. This might be because the protein content of legume-based food is higher than that of cereal based food [24].

The lysine content of Sample A is 0.91, and it is lower than other samples. This is expected, as lysine was the first limiting amino acid in cereal-based products. Wheat bread provided less than 20% of the recommended amount. This result is in agreement with [25] who published “a lack of lysine in cereals”. Generally, the amino acid composition is higher in Sample B than other samples. This might be because the highest...
The results showed that samples B, C, D, and E met 66.7% for recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of amino acid for 100gm of the formulated food samples [28].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amino acid</th>
<th>Sample A</th>
<th>Sample B</th>
<th>Sample C</th>
<th>Sample D</th>
<th>Sample E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lysine</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histidine</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arginine</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspartic acid</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threonine</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serine</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glutamic acid</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proline</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glycine</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alanine</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valine</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methionine</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoleucine</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leucine</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenylalanine</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cysteine</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C. Antinutritional Factors**

**TABLE V**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample inhibitor</th>
<th>Oxalates (mg/100g)</th>
<th>Tannins (mg/100g)</th>
<th>Saponins (mg/100g)</th>
<th>Flavonoid (mg/100g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.04±0.00*</td>
<td>0.12±0.01*</td>
<td>0.08±0.00*</td>
<td>0.09±0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.02±0.03*</td>
<td>0.40±0.01*</td>
<td>0.22±0.02*</td>
<td>0.55±0.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0.04±0.00*</td>
<td>0.31±0.00*</td>
<td>0.21±0.00*</td>
<td>0.11±0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.04±0.02*</td>
<td>0.22±0.02*</td>
<td>0.11±0.00*</td>
<td>0.15±0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0.05±0.01*</td>
<td>0.19±0.11*</td>
<td>0.17±0.02*</td>
<td>0.21±0.24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values are expressed as Mean ± Standard deviation. Means with different superscripts in the same column are significantly different (p<0.05). Means of triplicate determinations.

The levels of anti-nutritional factors found in the crackers are shown in Table V. The values obtained were generally low. The earlier work done by [29] is in concordance with this present work. In his work, he reported low anti-nutritional factors in commonly consumed food articles.

**D. Changes in Blood Glucose of Normal and Diabetic Rat**

Fig. 1 illustrates the variation in blood glucose of normal control, diabetic control and formulated crackers-treated rat during 4 weeks period of study. The blood glucose levels of diabetic rats were significantly higher compared with those of the control group (p<0.05). After the administration of the formulated crackers meal, a significant decrease in blood glucose was observed compared with that of the diabetic group fed with the control sample A (p<0.05). The diabetic rats in-group 4 fed with sample C have highest significant decrease in the level of glucose (101mg/dl). Generally all the diabetic rats fed with the formulated cracker showed significant reduction in plasma glucose but different level changes were observed throughout the 4 weeks compared with that of the diabetic rats in group 2 fed with rat feed and control sample A.

The reduction in plasma glucose might probably be because the formulated crackers contained more dietary fibre than control food, which increased the indigestible carbohydrate portion in small and large intestine, thereby reducing the rate of dietary carbohydrate absorption [30]. Its usefulness in the management of diabetes is thought to be due to dietary fibers ability to slow stomach emptying, modify responses of gastrointestinal hormones and delay glucose diffusion in the intestinal lumen. The reduction in the plasma glucose might also be due to the high protein content of the formulated crackers, which is higher than the control sample. Moderate protein in diet can also decrease blood glucose level [31].

**IV. CONCLUSION**

The hypoglycaemic effect of the formulated crackers is probably caused by high dietary fiber and protein content of sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers’ spent grain crackers. The usage of these formulated crackers will not only reduce the post-harvest losses associated with pigeon pea and plantain but also will increase the utilization of brewers’ spent grain. Therefore, replacing wheat based baked products with other locally available cheap products like sprouted pigeon pea, unripe plantain and brewers spent grain composite flour will exhibit a remarkable blood glucose lowering potential in diabetic rats and could be a means of preventing and managing diabetes.

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