

# CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ACCEPTABILITY OF A BAMBARA GROUNDNUT COMPLEMENTARY FOOD IN RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Protein energy malnutrition (PEM) in children resulting from an inadequate diet is a major public health concern in developing countries. Inclusion of affordable plant proteins, especially legumes in the diets of vulnerable groups may reduce PEM prevalence. Bambara groundnut, an underutilised legume indigenous to Africa is a rich source of protein. In this study, the consumer awareness and acceptability of bambara groundnut as a protein source was determined. Its potential for use in complementary feeding was also assessed.

**Methods:** Consumer awareness of bambara groundnut and acceptability of pureed samples made from bambara groundnut and common dry bean (reference) were assessed using a questionnaire. Black African female caregivers from a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa participated in the consumer awareness survey (n=70) and sensory evaluation (n=64). Focus group discussions were held with some of the participants to further determine their perception of the bambara puree.

**Results:** The survey participants were not familiar with bambara groundnut and its processing methods. The sensory attributes, including overall acceptability, of the bambara puree compared well with that of the reference. Grain colour significantly influenced overall acceptability of the puree ( $p < 0.05$ ). The caregivers expressed willingness to use the bambara groundnut in complementary feeding if it was accessible and beneficial to health.

**Conclusion:** Bambara groundnut is not a popular legume in KwaZulu-Natal and its utilisation is seemingly limited due to poor market availability and knowledge on cooking methods. However, there is potential for it to be used in complementary feeding.