

Abstract

Urban populations are utilizing a variety of initiatives to meet their food and nutrition security. Street food vending and consumption are some of such initiatives; and are wide spread especially among the urban poor. In Nairobi, more than 40% of lower-income groups consume street foods even though inadequate information exists on their nutrient content. These micronutrients are of public health concern in Kenya. The study investigated and compared vitamin A, iron and zinc content of commonly consumed street foods and factors that influence their nutrient levels from the middle-low (Dandora) and low (Kangemi) income areas of Nairobi. Fifteen and nine street foods (Dandora and Kangemi respectively) were evaluated using the high liquid performance chromatography for vitamin A, and atomic absorption spectrophotometer for iron and zinc content. Chi Square (χ^2) and Student's t-tests were used to compare proportional data and means respectively. Results show that orange fleshed sweet potato mainly consumed in Dandora had 130 μ gRE/100g the highest amounts of vitamin A. The rest ranged between 34.02 to 0.00 μ gRE/100g. Cabbages had the highest amounts of iron 18mg/100g, the rest ranged between 11.1 mg/100g to 0.0 mg/100g. Iron levels of cabbages, sausages, kales, and potato chips were comparatively higher in street foods analyzed than those from FAO and Sehmi data. Bioavailability of iron was higher in animal (97% -70%) sources compared to plant (50%-20%) sources in both sites. Important source of zinc was cabbages with 19.34g/100g, while others ranged between 12.1 g/100g, 0.0g/100g. The nutrient content of SFs between the two sites did not differ significantly although Dandora appeared to have higher iron content as compared to Kangemi.