STUDY ON FAT CONTENT AND FATTY ACID PROFILE OF SELECTED COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE JUNK FOODS IN THE KILINOCHCHI DISTRICT

T. Tharsiga*[1] and S. Vasantharuba[1]
[1]*Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna*
**Corresponding author (email: tharchetharu@gmail.com)*

Introduction

Junk foods are foods that are easily accessible, usually inexpensive, and low in nutritional content. These foods are higher in calories, salt, and saturated fat and lower in vitamins, iron, calcium, and dietary fiber. Consumption of junk foods in excess amounts leads to various health disorders [2]. A range of fast-food types such as fried foods, carbonated beverages, sweets and chocolates are available for sale in most Sri Lankan food outlets, yet, their nutritional data are scarce. Oil is the major ingredient and the amount of oil that is absorbed by fried foods depends on the type of oil used [4]. Both fried foods and frying oil have an impact on one another and work together to increase the probability of complex chemical events, primarily hydrolysis, oxidation and polymerization in the oil during frying [3]. Trans fats are in a higher percentage in certain kinds of fried foods. The relationship between the dietary consumption of trans fatty acids with increased risk of coronary heart diseases, cancer, obesity and diabetes mellitus has been reported [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises keeping total TFA intake to less than 1% of total calories, or 2.2g per day with a diet of 2000 calories and limiting the consumption of SFAs to less than 15.6 to 22.2 g/day [5].

The present study was designed to quantify the total and trans fatty acid content and fatty acid groups, namely saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fatty acid content of junk food products that are heavily consumed by the people in Kilinochchi. The results of this study will be useful to create awareness among people regarding the nutritional quality of junk foods and useful for policy makers in the health sectors.