

# The Storage and Processing of Cassava-Based Nigerian Staple Foods for the Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases

Type of Article: Abstract

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## BACKGROUND

The epidemiological transition has firmly berthed in Nigeria, with the rising prevalence of various non-communicable diseases, in almost every community in Nigeria. Diet and nutrition are known drivers of this transition. Cassava based staple foods are considered as “super foods”, especially in southern Nigeria and eaten at least once a day. This review article discussed the possible ways cassava-based staples can be processed and/or stored for the control of the emerging non-communicable diseases.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data for the review were collected from peer review journals and include information required to improve the nutritional value of the cassava-based staples, those needed to reduce their glycaemic index and microbial and chemical hazards, and those required to process and store them into forms that are better suited to life in urban centers.

## RESULTS

Cassava contains deadly cyanogens, rich only in carbohydrates and grossly deficient in other nutrients, but has an annual per capita consumption in Nigeria of 120kg. These have been linked to malnutrition, konzo, goiter and tropical ataxic neuropathy; which can be prevented if the cassava is enriched with the deficient nutrients, possibly using genetic modification, and fermented for at least three days. The cassava-based staples also have high GI, which can be reduced by re-processing them to retain more chaff, dehydrating the wet variety, and eating them with soups rich in leafy vegetable. The staples should be stored

in packages that limit the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms; and marketed in forms that are convenient for the urban population.

## CONCLUSION

Cassava-based staples have a prominent role to play in the fight against non-communicable diseases in Nigeria, especially if all the identified hazards in them are corrected.

**Keywords:** Making Cassava healthy; Non-communicable disease prevention

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