

**HISTAMINE IN SCOMBROID FISH OF SRI LANKA**

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The consumption of fish of the Scombridae family sometimes cause toxic reactions which has resulted these fish to be termed "heaty", in Sri Lanka. Histamine may cause some of the symptoms associated with the toxic condition connected to consuming Scombroid fish, which is known as Scombrototoxicosis.

Information on the incidence and levels of histamine in fish available to consumers in Sri Lanka is sparse, and this study was conducted to survey the histamine levels in retail fish. Small scale retail outlets along the roads from Colombo to Kurunegala, Kadugannawa and Ratnapura were selected for the study. A maximum of 15 samples were collected from each route in the months of May, June, July and September, brought to the laboratory in ice and analyzed for the histamine content. The samples comprised mainly of Skipjack tuna, Yellow fin tuna, Frigate mackerel, Indian mackerel, Trenched sardine, Bullet tuna and Mackerel tuna. Some samples of Seer fish, Sardines, Flying fish and Sword fish too were analyzed.

A total of 51, 57 and 60 samples were collected from Kadugannawa, Kurunegala and Ratnapura, respectively. Nearly 18% of these samples were found to contain >20 mg% of histamine in the flesh. Of these 7% had a concentration of histamine greater than 200 mg%. High levels of histamine indicate that these fish are subject to temperature abuse. Fish with very high levels of histamine (>200 mg%) may be responsible for the "heaty" effect.

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