

Exploring the toxic metal contamination and unveiling the risks in staple grains grown in a CKDu hotspot in Sri Lanka

M. A. S. N. Perera¹, W. P. R. T. Perera^{1,3*}, P. L. R. A. Perera¹, C. Kadigamuwa², J. A. Liyanage¹, and W. A. P. J. Premaratne¹

¹CKDu Information and Research Centre & Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

²Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

³Department of Indigenous Medical Resources, Faculty of Indigenous Health Sciences and Technology, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka

Toxic metals in dietary grains could pose health risks from direct ingestion. This investigation aims to analyze the concentrations of toxic metals in selected dietary grains and conduct a comparative risk assessment in a region endemic to Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown etiology (CKDu) in a non-endemic region. Six household fields in the CKDu endemic region in *Nikawewa* Grama Niladhari Division (GND) and three in the reference region; *Wewagedara* GND were selected for sampling. Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) was used to determine Arsenic (As), Cadmium (Cd), Lead (Pb), Chromium (Cr), Copper (Cu), and Zinc (Zn) in composite samples collected from both GND areas (pulses; [(*Vigna radiata*; n=20), (*Vigna unguiculata*; n=20), (*Vigna unguiculata* subsp.; n=20)] cereal; [(*Oryza sativa*; n=30)]. Descriptive statistics revealed average As concentrations in samples as follows; *Oryza sativa* (38.60±13.84 µg/kg), *Vigna unguiculata* (3.25±1.96 µg/kg), As was undetectable in samples of *Vigna radiata*, and *Vigna unguiculata* subsp. in CKDu endemic area. The average As concentrations of *Oryza sativa* in the reference area was 5.56±1.87 µg/kg and As was not detected in other grain species. All values complied with FAO/WHO & Codex permissible limits (As-100-200 µg/kg). The estimated Daily Intake (EDI) value of As (0.257 µg/kg/day) in *Oryza sativa* in the endemic area did not exceed the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) (As-0.3 µg/kg/day). The average concentrations of Cd and Pb were reported in the CKDu endemic area; *Oryza sativa* (Cd-1276.92±234.42 µg/kg, Pb-419.31±98.78 µg/kg), *Vigna radiata* (Cd-571.31±60.71 µg/kg, Pb-344.15±93.75 µg/kg), *Vigna unguiculata* (Cd-1354.33±265.34 µg/kg, Pb-408.56±22.20 µg/kg), and *Vigna unguiculata* subsp. (Cd-1546.23±355.23 µg/kg, Pb-408.63±115.14 µg/kg) and exceeded FAO/WHO permissible limit (Cd-400 µg/kg, Pb-300 µg/kg). But those values were within the limits in the reference areas. However, Cu, Cr, and Zn remained within FAO/WHO safe limits in both regions. A health risk can be generated owing to long-term consumption of staple grains grown in *Nikawewa* GND; CKDu endemic area.

Keywords: CKDu, Contamination, Estimated Daily Intake (EDI), Grains, Heavy metals

* wprtp@gwu.ac.lk