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### Physicochemical and nutritional properties of selected traditional foods of Sri Lanka

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Traditional foods are the foods which have been consumed locally or regionally for many generations. Such foods play an important role in maintaining good health and nutrition of people since ancient times. Sri Lanka is a country having a variety of traditional foods. However, limited research findings are available on physicochemical and nutritional properties of such foods. The present study investigated the important physicochemical and nutritional properties of selected traditional foods of Sri Lanka. Five Sri Lankan traditional foods namely Olu rice or Olu hal (seeds of *Nymphaea pubescens*), Thana hal (*Setaria italica*), Rathnamali rice (*Oryza sativa*), black gram or Udu (*Vigna mungo*) and Amu (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) were used in this study. Moisture, crude protein (CP), crude fat (CF), crude ash (CA) and total dietary fiber (TDF) contents of whole grains of selected traditional foods were studied using internationally accepted standard techniques (TDF: n = 2 and other properties n = 3 each). The results showed significant differences ( $P < 0.05$ ) among the selected traditional foods for the tested physicochemical and nutritional properties. Moisture, CP, CF, CA and TDF contents of the selected traditional foods varied from  $10.38 \pm 0.74$  to  $13.27 \pm 0.09$ ,  $8.83 \pm 0.39$  to  $23.74 \pm 0.42$ ,  $0.50 \pm 0.04$  to  $4.44 \pm 0.07$ ,  $1.45 \pm 0.03$  to  $5.87 \pm 0.01$  and  $0.01 \pm 0.01$  to  $31.84 \pm 0.78$  %, respectively. Black gram (Udu) and Thana hal demonstrated the highest CP ( $23.74 \pm 0.42$  %) and CF ( $4.44 \pm 0.07$  %) contents respectively while Amu exhibited the highest CA ( $5.87 \pm 0.01$  %) and TDF ( $31.84 \pm 0.78$  %) contents. It is concluded that selected traditional foods of Sri Lanka had varied physicochemical and nutritional properties. Black gram (Udu) and Thana hal are rich sources of proteins and fats, respectively while Amu, black gram and Thana hal are excellent sources of dietary fiber. Thus, consumption of selected traditional foods of Sri Lanka may be helpful in maintaining good health and nutrition.

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