

Energy, total fat, saturated fat and salt of precooked sausages, in 2023 Portuguese market

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Introduction

The of risks related with high salt intake are a frequent public health issue. The National Food and Physical Activity Survey, 2015-2016 (IAN-AF) shows that salt consumption by the Portuguese population averages 7.4 g of salt per day. Therefore, approximately 3.7 million women (63.2%) and 4.4 million men (88.9%) have a sodium intake above the tolerable level (2.3 g/day).¹

In Portugal, an individual intake of 5 g/day by 2020 was set by the Integrated Strategy for Healthy Eating Promotion (EIPAS). EIPAS recommended a maximum salt content of 0.3 g/100 g for general food products.²

EIPAS also refers energy and fat as health concerns. Sausages, that can be meat or vegetable-based, are sources of fat, saturated fat and salt.

Objectives

To characterize the nutritional composition of precooked sausages available on Portuguese market through labelling information and its compliance with reference documents.

Methods

Nutritional information on the labelling of precooked sausages, regarding energy, total fat, saturated fat and salt, was gathered from online stores of Portuguese supermarkets in 2023. Comparisons were made based, for salt, on EIPAS goal (0.3 g/100 g), and for fat and saturates on Directorate-General of Health Label Decoder.

Results

82 precooked sausages based on pork (45), poultry (24) and vegetable (13) presented complete nutritional information. The nutritional content per 100 g, expressed as median, was:

- Pork-based sausages – energy: 209 kcal, fat: 17 g, saturates: 5.8 g and salt: 1.8 g;
- Poultry-based sausages – energy: 147 kcal, fat: 10.5 g, saturates: 3.1 g and salt: 1.7 g;
- Vegetable-based sausages – energy: 217 kcal, fat: 18 g, saturates: 2.2 g and salt: 1.5 g.

Vegetable-based sausages presented higher energy and fat than meat-based sausages but lower saturated fat and salt content.

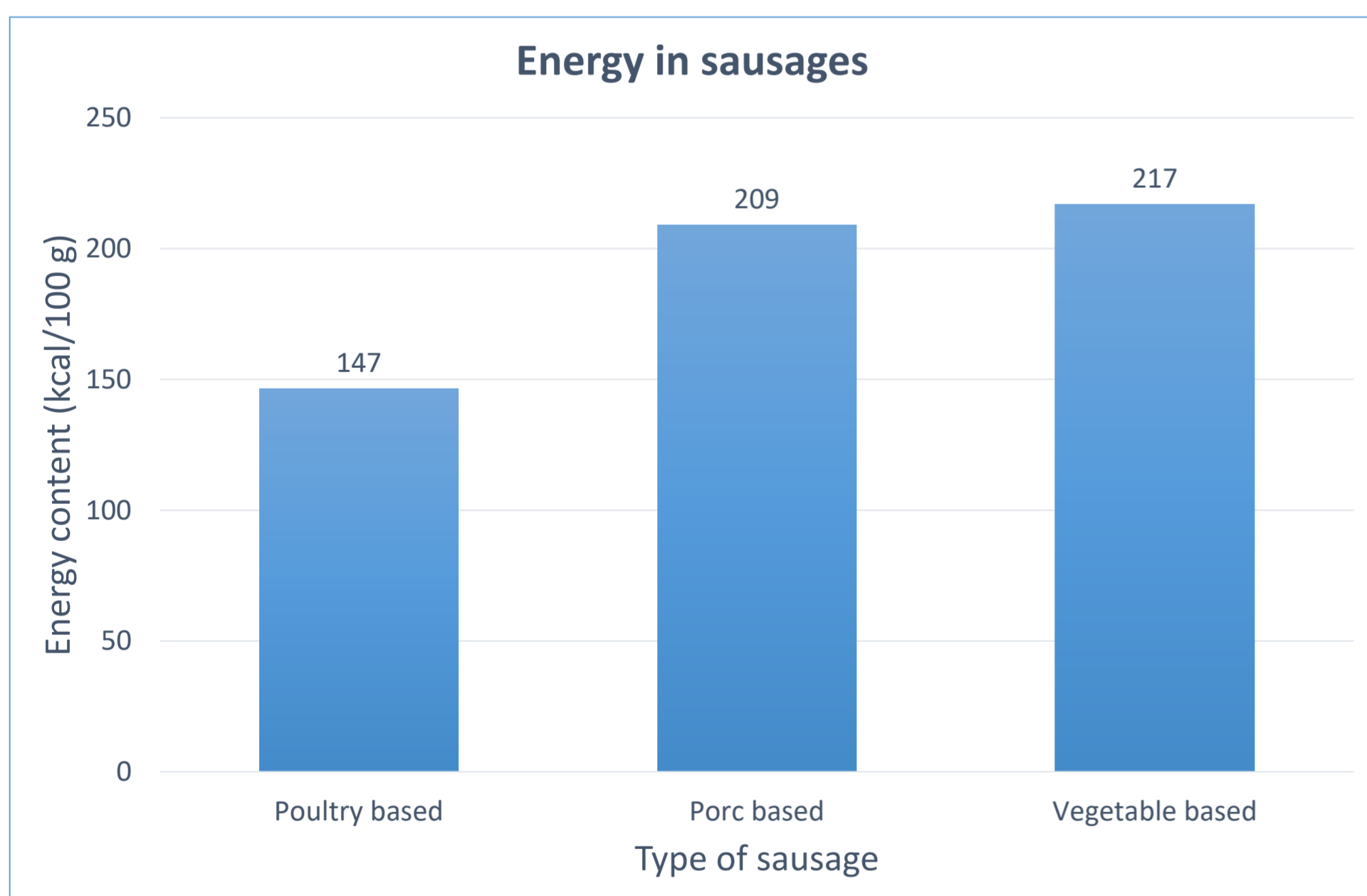


Fig. 1: Energy median content (kcal/100 g) by sausage type

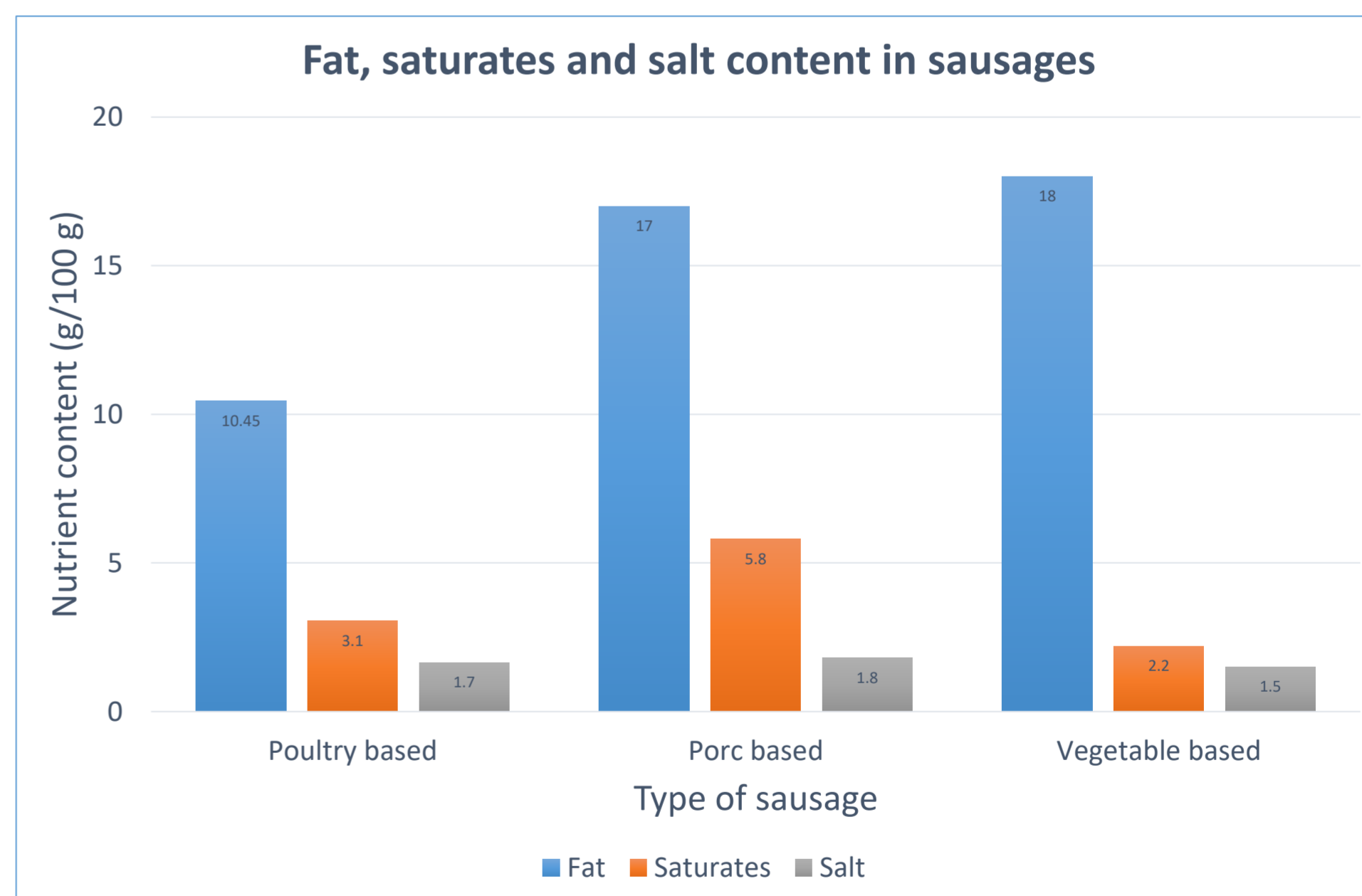


Fig. 2: Fat, saturates and salt median content (g/100 g) by sausage type

Conclusions

Precooked sausages, based on the Label Decoder, showed medium contents of fat and saturated fat, and high content of salt (also higher than the EIPAS salt goal). Vegetable-based sausages presented the lowest salt and the highest energy and total fat contents. Pork-based sausages showed the highest saturated fat and salt content. In poultry-based sausages was found the lowest energy and fat contents. None of the products complied with EIPAS recommendations for salt.

Considering the mean nutritional composition of the whole sample, the consumption of 100 g of sausages would provide 10 % of daily reference values for energy, 22 % for fat, 11 % for saturates and 28 % for salt, for a reference intake of 2000 kcal/day.

References

[1]- National Food and Physical Activity Survey, IAN-AF 2015-2016 | Results report

[2]- Diário da República (Portuguese Official Journal, 2nd serie, nr. 249, office nr. 11418/2017, the 29th December 2017).