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Contamination of some fermented Nigerian beverages by carcinogenic nitrosamines.

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[Abstract](#)

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[Tropical and Geographical Medicine](#) [1979, 31(2):283-290]

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Abstract

A survey to determine the extent of the nitrosamine contamination of some popular fermented Nigerian beverages by dimethyl- and diethylnitrosamine has been carried out in the Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Kwara and Benue States of Nigeria, following the mass spectrometric detection of these carcinogens in palm wine and nono (sour milk). The indication is that the contamination of the drinks, namely, palm-wine, nono, pito, burukutu, and ogogoro, by both nitrosamines is widespread and occurs at the part per billion level. 0.6 - 22 μg nitrosamine/l was found by routine thin layer and gas liquid chromatographic methods using authentic nitrosamines as reference standards. Because of the widespread contamination of the test beverages by dimethyl- and diethylnitrosamine, and the usually frequent occurrence of nitrosamine precursors in nature, it is presumed that these potent and versatile carcinogens could play a significant role in the formation of human cancers in the Nigerian population.

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