

# **Consumer Knowledge, Perceptions, Consumption patterns and quality assessment of Sobolo (Roselle sabdariffa drink) in Southern Ghana.**

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## **Abstract**

“Sobolo” is a drink / beverage produced from the calyx of bissap (*Roselle sabdariffa*). “Sobolo” is marketed as a health beverage and promoted for its nutritional and medicinal benefits; however the quality and efficacy of this drink cannot be guaranteed. In Ghana, due to the rising popularity in the consumption of this bissap drink, there is the need to assess and gather information on consumer perceptions, knowledge and consumption pattern in relation to its associated benefits. This survey forms part of a study which is assessing the quality of bissap drink produced locally in Southern Ghana. A consumer survey was carried out using semi-structured questionnaires to randomly select willing respondents in the Accra Metropolis. Based on the method described by Moore and McCabe, a sample size of 400 was obtained using a margin of error of 5%. Four hundred (405) respondents were used in this study. A representative number of respondents were interviewed from each of the residential classification area in the Accra Metropolitan Area. Data entry and analysis was done using SPSS (version 16.0). Frequencies were generated for the variables and significant associations were tested at  $p \leq 0.05$  using Chi-square. Data gathered indicated that 49.4% of the respondents were male and 50.6% were females. 44.9% of the subjects have attained tertiary education. 53.6% are Akan. 72.8% were single and 26.7% married. 26.4% indicated that they consumed bissap drink at least 2-4 times a week, while 52.8% did not consume bissap drink that often. Most of the respondent (81.0%) did not prepare the drink themselves. 50.9% of respondents who purchase sobolo, bought the drink from street vendors or hawkers. 39.9% of respondents consume it a full meal or snack and 14.4% indicated that they consume bissap only to quench their thirst. 43.5% of the subjects consume bissap indicated that reasons they patronise bissap drink is because of its taste rather than colour,

aroma or taste. 61.7% consume bissap drink for its related health benefit 30.9% it improves blood supply. 28.6% indicated that it cures malaria, 22.7% indicated it improves kidney, liver and heart function and 19% of respondents also stated that it gets rid of toxins. 13.3%, 11.6%, 6.7% 4.9% for hypertension, diabetes, Sexual potency and cures/ prevents cancer. Since most of the respondents (81.0%) buy bissap drink from the vendors/market, this confirms high patronage and consumer's willingness to buy bissap drink which are well prepared and packaged. Since "sobolo" is mostly consumed for its health benefits, there is the need to further investigate the content of the drink to better understand the phytochemicals present that enhance these medicinal properties. This will help in the marketing and consequent consumption of the drink and help generate income for the local processors who are engaged in the preparation and sale of this drink.

**Key words:** Bissap, health, consumption pattern, beliefs