

ABSTRACT

A study was done to detect the quality of common foods available in Sri Lanka. The main food products tested were table salt, condiment, turmeric, chilli, pepper, coconut oil, coconut toddy vinegar, tea and common alcohol. Suspicious samples of different food items collected island wide by public health inspectors were tested against the specifications given by No. 26 of 1986 "Food Act" and Sri Lanka standards.

A significant number of salt samples tested were detected to be poor in quality due to the high amount of moisture and unacceptable amounts of iodine present in them. A few samples of condiment, chilli, pepper and turmeric were found to be poor in quality due to the presence of insects, insect larvae, insect eggs and fungus; adulteration with foreign starches and due to the high amount of moisture level in them. A significant number of coconut oil samples were found to be poor in quality due to adulteration with other cheap oils (palm oil) or due to the high amount of free fatty acids (rancidity) in them. A few samples of coconut toddy vinegar tested poor in quality. Tea available in market was relatively good in quality.

This study gives an idea of the quality of food that is available in the island, and the study has basically revealed that the food is poor in quality. Consumers should be protected from food, which is contaminated and adulterated. The present food regulations should be updated to accommodate the public requirements by adjusting the specifications and establishing regional laboratories.