

Nutraceutical advantages and limitations of *V. paradoxa* fruit pulp and Shea butter

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Abstract

The Shea tree is an indigenous fruit bearing plant distributed within the African Shea belt. Apart from its nutritiveness, it has been used for several decades as an ingredient in many pharmaceutical formulations. In this review, the fatty acid profile of Shea butter and the proximate analysis of Shea fruit pulp is analysed alongside similar products. Therein, attention is focused on how these chemical compositions differ and the significance of these variations from nutraceutical and economic points of view. Examining the literature showed that Shea fruit pulp has the best overall rating (28%) as far as meeting the recommended daily intake (RDI) is concerned. Additionally, the pulp of this fruit contains much more vitamin C than other commonly consumed fruits. Although the unsaturated fatty acid content of Shea butter is significantly lower than that of Macadamia, Olive and Sesame oil, the unsaponifiable matter (USM) in the former is extraordinarily higher than most vegetable oils. USM are believed to possess anti-inflammatory and cholesterol-lowering properties. As a recommendation for future research, chemical analyses for USM should also be done wholesomely for all the constituents as compared to selective analyses which is the current trend.