



PUBLIC NOTICE

31/7/2025

STATEMENT ON THE MISINFORMATION: FRONT-PAGE NEW VISION ARTICLE DIABETES SPIKE LINKED TO MUCH MATOOKE AND KALO

The Nutrition Society of Uganda (NSU) would like to draw the public attention to misinformation published on the front page of the **NEW VISION** newspaper dated **Wednesday 30th July 2025**.

The caption “**Diabetes spike linked to too much matooke and Kalo**” on the front page of New Vision is subsequently detailed by one John Masaba on page 3 of New Vision. On page 3 of the new vision, we learn the title of the study was “**social norms as influencers of type 2 diabetes risk taking behaviors: A qualitative deep dive diagnosis in two high burden districts of Uganda**” by Dr. Juliet Kiguli et al.

We learn that the study was conducted in Bugiri and Busia, districts that **don't typically consume matooke**. On the same page 3 a map is reflected showing staples consumed by region. From the **map Busoga region where Bugiri is located is known to consume sweet potatoes and Busia is known to consume maize as a staple**. We therefore question how 2 districts that don't traditionally consume Matooke or Kalo could have been used to make a national inference on matooke and Kalo?

Furthermore, we learn from the **British Medical Journal (Volume 15, issue 7)** where the study was published that a total of only 45 participants was interviewed for this study. These included 10 T2D patients, 10 caregivers, 10 health care providers, 2 village team members, 4 diabetes free community members, 4 community influencers and 5 family members. Given this was a qualitative study, we question how a sample size of 45 people could have been used to make a national inference, noting Uganda has close to 45 million people.



As the professional body of Nutritionists in Uganda, we would like to disregard and distance ourselves from the study findings as we question the scientific basis of the study.

The Nutrition Society of Uganda, would like to inform the public that;

Staple foods are the foundation of a population's diet, providing a significant portion of their energy. They are typically affordable, readily available and versatile. In Uganda common staples include Matooke, maize, millet/kalo, cassava, potatoes, yams. While these staples do largely contain a nutrient called carbohydrates that is broken down in the body to provide energy in form of glucose, the carbohydrate content of these staples varies from staple to staple.

The rate at which the carbohydrates in any food are broken down in the body to provide energy in the form of glucose, is called the **glycemic index**. Glycemic index is a system that ranks foods containing carbohydrates based on how quickly they raise blood sugar levels after consumption. It's a numerical scale usually from **0 to 100**.

Foods with a high glycemic index are digested and absorbed rapidly, causing a quick spike in blood sugar (eg sugary drinks, processed foods), while those with a low glycemic index are digested and absorbed more slowly, leading to a more gradual rise in blood sugar.

Staple foods generally have a lower glycemic index compared to processed foods and in fact matooke is among the staple foods with a low glycemic index. Evidence from studies conducted in Uganda does show the glycemic index of raw matooke to be about 30.

Foods with a low glycemic index are generally better with blood sugar control, weight management and reduced risk of certain health conditions. However, the glycemic index is not the only factor to consider when choosing food; dietary fibre, nutrient density and portion sizes are important for a healthy diet.

It's important to note that all foods that contain carbohydrates do have a glycemic index and as such have the potential to raise blood sugar, however of public health concern are refined, processed and super processed sugary foods and beverages and over reliance on predominant carbohydrate unbalanced diets.



As guided by the **World Health Organization**, the nutrition dietary recommendations are:

- **Focus on whole foods:** prioritize whole unprocessed foods over highly processed foods
- **Limit added sugars and refined grains** which can negatively impact blood sugar levels
- **Emphasize non starchy vegetables** (e.g leafy greens) in your diet for their nutritional value and fibre content.
- **Consider carbohydrate reduction:** for individuals with type 2 diabetes not meeting their glycemic goals, reducing overall carbohydrate intake can be a viable option
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** these are important for overall health and can be included in a diabetes -friendly diet
- **Individual needs:** dietary recommendations should be tailored to individual needs, preferences and health status
- **Weight management:** if overweight or obese, weight loss can significantly improve diabetes management
- **Health lifestyle:** A healthy, balanced diet, along with other lifestyle factors such as physical activity contribute to overall health and wellbeing including reducing risks of complications associated with diabetes

The public has a right to accurate information and as such we would like to appeal to all media houses to always quality assure and vet such related content by working closely with the relevant professional bodies such as the Nutrition Society of Uganda in this case.

Lastly, we call upon the New Vision newspaper as part of your social cooperation responsibility to come out and rectify this misinformation.



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