

Assessment of Radionuclides in some Fruits from Niger Delta, Nigeria and its Health Risks

Abstract

Determination of radionuclides' activity concentration in fruits is essential for the protection of human health. Fruits can be radioactive due to the present of naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORMs) and technically enhanced radioactive materials (TENORMs) in the environment. The Assessment of Radionuclides in Some Fruits from Niger Delta, Nigeria and its Health Risks were carried out using gamma ray spectroscopy. The study measured the activity concentration of radionuclides in fruits and the results showed that the total activity concentration of ^{40}K , ^{232}Th and ^{226}Ra in fruits were 578.24 Bqkg^{-1} , 263.84 Bqkg^{-1} and 128.35 Bqkg^{-1} respectively. The study found out that ^{40}K has the highest value of activity concentration while apricot has the highest value of radionuclide concentration compared to other fruits. The present study also compared the activity concentration of radionuclides with other studies. The statistical analysis of data was also done using statistical packages. The average estimated AED for Infants, Children and Adults due to the radioactivity in Avocado, Apricot, Guava and Pear were; $829.02 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $565.865 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, and $838.725 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $2737.665 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $4361.4875 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$ and $2497.9025 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $651.20833 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $1202.6767 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$ and $813.22167 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, and $1164.7883 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$, $1724.2933 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$ and $1088.8933 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$ respectively. The estimated AED due to the consumption of various fruits are above the world value. However, the estimated excess lifetime cancer risks for the various fruits are far below the world (WHO) limit. The study concluded that there is no cancer risk associated with the consumption of fruits in the study area and that the fruits that have tap root systems recorded highest value of radionuclides' activity concentration.

Keywords: Fruit, Consumption, Radionuclides, Spectroscopy

Introduction

In recent years radiation issues have become major concern to physicists in particular and scientists and environmentalists in general. Hence, both the type of radiation, sources of radiations, uses and their interactions with matter has been the most interesting and disturbing aspect in our day-to-day activities, ranging from the manufacturing, oil and gas and food industries. Radiation is important to man and other creatures in their activities. Man is exposed to different types of radiations at different levels, rate or dosage. The nature or type of radiation determine its effect and as such, the necessity for exposure (therapeutic) (Cancer Council, 2003).

Man is exposed to radiations that are emitted by radionuclides in the environment (i.e. air, water and soil), (UNSCEAR, 2009). The amount or quantity of radionuclides in a given environment is

affected or dependent on the type of man-made and natural activities that are prominent in such locations or regions. The amount of radionuclide and radiations that man is exposed to is also a factor of the geological component of the bedrocks and other particles or minerals that are present within the environment, these in turn give rise to background radiation in that environment.

Radiation sources are used in fertilizer productions, medical diagnosis and therapy, as such these applications have led to the increase in background radiation and the radiation levels of many industrial workers (Avwiri, 2011). Internal radiation exposure is the most harmful and unhealthy human exposure to radiation from radionuclides and that is why it is advisable to stay away (safe & free) from radiation sources (WHO, 2009). Radionuclides or radioisotopes that are present in the soil, air and water (environment) can be transferred to fruits through the roots, and leaves of the plants. Avwiri *et al.*, (2012) observed that naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORMs) are absorbed by food crops and fruits and this is possible because the NORMs are absorbed by the plants just like they absorb other plant nutrients in the soil or from other components of the environment (air & water).

Radionuclides undergo radioactive decay and as such are found in nature, and can be artificially produced by man. The radionuclides that are found in the environment may cause harmful effects to man and the environment because they have excess energy due to their instability. This instability is what gives rise to radioactivity or radioactive decay.

The radionuclides in the soil are transported to food crops & fruits through plant-root nutrient uptake pathway, thus the uptake of radionuclides from the soil to plant depend on some factors such as soil characteristics, type of plants, part of plant (Avwiri *et al.*; 2012). The presence of Potassium (K) and Calcium (Ca) in the soil affects the uptake of Uranium, Thorium and Radium content by plant and the clays of alluvial soil which trap potassium in its crystal lattice, and the contents of Phosphate that form insoluble compounds reduces radionuclides' availability to plants (Chen *et al.*; 2005).

WHO (2011) opined that level of radionuclides in foods vary and dependent on several factors such as type of food, fruit, and geographical region where the food is produced. The common radionuclides found in foods (cereals, tubers, etc), and fruits are; ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{238}U and their associated progeny.

However, the foods and fruits that we eat could contribute to a large extent, to the level or dosage of internal radiation that we could be exposed to, depending on the level of radionuclides that are present in such fruits or foods (UNSCEAR, 2013). The fact is that naturally, radiation is everywhere, even in our body. The average human body is composed of radionuclides at least in part, which include; Carbon-14 and Uranium (Anne, 2018). Sowole and Olaniyi, (2018) reveal that the natural radionuclides in fruits include: ^{238}U , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K , and that the concentrations of these radionuclides in fruits ranges between $102.36 \pm 10.81 \text{ BqKg}^{-1}$ and $8.01 \pm 3.25 \text{ BqKg}^{-1}$ with ^{40}K having the highest concentration. The calculated average annual committed effective dose for all the radionuclides was 0.11 mSvyr^{-1} and this value obtained is below the average recommended limit of 0.3 mSvy^{-1} by UNSCEAR (2000).

Onoja *et al.*, (2017) measured and estimated the annual effective dose from radionuclides due to intake of fruits and observed that the activity concentration of the three primordial radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{232}Th and ^{226}Ra) are: 465.94 Bqkg^{-1} for ^{40}K , 4.14 Bqkg^{-1} for ^{226}Ra and 119.04 Bqkg^{-1} for ^{232}Th . The annual effective dose (AED) due to the intake of identified radionuclides were estimated for different fruits like orange, mango, banana and pineapple. The study concluded that all the AED of the sampled fruits were below UNSCEAR (2008) standard for internal exposure, but the AED for orange exceeded the UNSCEAR limit of 0.29 mSvy^{-1} ($290 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$).

Abojassim, *et al.*, (2016) maintained that naturally occurring radionuclides are found in the environment and as such any food crop and fruits that are found in the environment contain these radionuclides in different quantities. Moreover, the study found out that ^{40}K has the highest

activity concentration and it is present in all the sampled fruits and vegetables. The study also affirms that annual effective dose from fruits' consumption by infants is larger than the dose from adults, and that the annual effective dose in all fruit samples was lower than the permissible limit. The study found out that the total average annual effective dose in fruit samples for infants, children and adults were 0.388 mSv, 0.295 mSv and 0.141 mSv respectively. Thus, the values for specific activity and the annual effective dose for different age categories in all samples were lower than world acceptable limit according to UNSCEAR (2000).

Priharti *et al*, (2016) opined that ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th are the radionuclides that are present in fruits like; Apple, Pear and Papaya. The study measured the activity concentration of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K in these samples of fruits from different locations, and the averages were determined. The study found out that the highest activity concentration was in ^{40}K , followed by ^{226}Ra and lastly by ^{232}Th . The study compared the effective doses due to the ingestion of radionuclides from fruits for different age categories and found out that the effective dose for infants and children were higher than adults and the researcher concluded that this is due to the higher value of ingestion dose conversion factor for each radionuclide for various age categories. However, the recorded values are below the annual radiation dose from natural sources according to UNSCEAR.

In Niger Delta, the adverse effect of pollution due to the industrial activities in the region is very alarming. The pollutants (example; Radionuclides), can be transported from one point to another. Fruits as major sources of vitamins and minerals are cultivated in this radiation polluted environment and these fruits are consumed by humans and the consumption of these fruits could lead to radiation hazard such as cancer, radiation sickness and organ failure. Hence, there is need to ascertain the level of radionuclides that are present in the fruits and possible radiological risks that are associated with consuming fruits from Niger Delta.

2. Materials and Method

Materials

A Sodium Iodide Thallium activated [NaI(Tl)] detector connected to ORTEC 456 amplifier is used in measuring the activity concentration of the radionuclides ^{232}Th , ^{226}Ra and ^{40}K in the collected fruit samples. The NaI(Tl) detector is used to detect ionizing radiation emitters (radionuclides) in a given material.

The detector converts the ionization and excitation produced by radiation into light pulse or scintillation and the amount of this light that is produced is proportional to the amount of energy deposited by the radiation (particle or photon) (Vlado, 2019). The process is such that a small light pulse is then converted into an electric pulse by an electric component (a photomultiplier tube). The size of the amplified electric pulse is proportional to the energy deposited by the radiation.

The proportionality of the output pulses (light) to the deposited radiation energy enables the output to be used as input pulses for a gamma spectrometer and thereby discriminate between different types and energies of radiations (radiation emitters). This process is repeated each time gamma radiation hits the crystal. The role of Ti is strictly to enable the detector to operate properly. Thus, when ionizing radiation enters the crystal, it produces electron-hole pairs. The thallium-doped NaI converts the energy from the incident gamma radiation into light in the visible spectrum which is then detected with the photomultiplier tube. Basically, the principle of gamma spectroscopy is that every gamma emitting radionuclide always emits a gamma ray with specific energies.

Methods of Data Collection

The method of data collection is observation method. Total samples of ten (10) fruits were collected from the Niger Delta Region. The samples were collected from major markets in the region within a given location based on sample collection plan that covered the study area effectively.

Table 1: Sample Collection Area

S/N	Sample Name	Sample Area	Number of Samples
1	Apricot	Abia State	1
2	Avocado Pear	Imo State	1
3	Guava	Abia State	1
4	Guava	Cross-River State	1
5	Guava	Delta State	1
6	Guava	Rivers State	1
7	Pear	Bayelsa State	1
8	Pear	Edo State	1
9	Pear	Imo State	1
10	Pear	Rivers State	1
Total;			10

3. Study Area

The Niger Delta is a densely populated region that is sometimes called “the Oil Rivers” because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The region presently consists of nine states and one hundred & eighty-five (185) Local Government Areas. The States that make up the Niger Delta are: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State.

The Niger Delta is a tropical rain climate with a mean high annual rainfall which varies within the region. It is located at longitude 50°E to 80°E, latitude 4°N-10°N of the equator and at an altitude below 1000 meters, (NGIA; Opafunso, 2007).

The Niger Delta region is also known as the Oil producing region in Nigeria, because it is where almost 100% of Nigeria’s crude oil is gotten from. The region occupies 75,000km² (7.5%) of the total land area of Nigeria, and is home to approximately 30 million people (Asanebi, 2016).

The local communities in Niger Delta have been experiencing environmental hazards and degradation of agricultural land due to oil spills during crude oil exploration (extraction and refining).

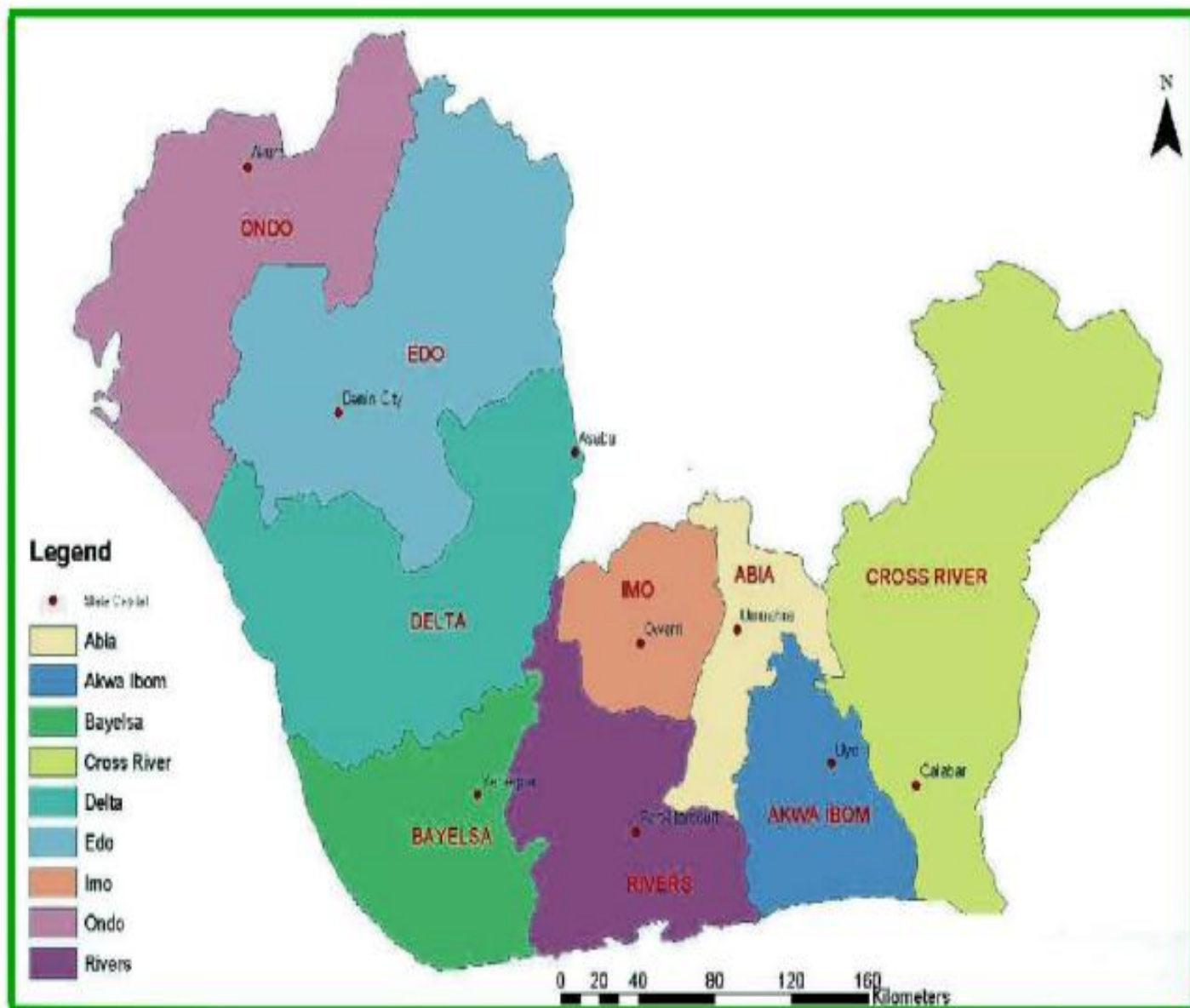


Fig. 1: Map of the Study Area (Niger Delta) (NDP, 2006)

Preparation of Samples

After collection, samples were cut into pieces, air dried for three (3) weeks, grinded and passed through a 2 mm mesh size sieve. Afterwards, the air dried and ground samples were weighed using a weighing balance. Then the samples were packed in special air tight polyethylene plastic containers (PVC), closed and tightly sealed using cello tape for 30 days so as to allow for ^{238}U and its short-lived progenies to reach secular radioactive equilibrium (Veiga *et al*, 2006) before gamma counting. The sealed sample containers were labelled appropriately. Using equation 3.1, dried samples were measured and calculated as follows:

$$W_3Kg = (W_2 - W_1)Kg \quad (1)$$

The weight of the empty container was recorded ($W_1\text{kg}$), the pulverized sample packed into the container and weighed ($W_2\text{kg}$) and the final weight ($W_3\text{kg}$) was calculated by subtracting the

weight of the empty plastic container (W_1 kg) from the weight of the sample plus the container (W_2 kg).

After this period all the decay products in the ^{232}Th series and ^{226}Ra sub-series were in radioactive equilibrium with their daughters.

Analysis of Samples

The prepared samples were analyzed by inserting them inside the detector which was connected to a computer program MAESTRO window that matched gamma energies to a library of possible isotopes.

The detector was shielded by 15cm thick lead all round and 10cm thick on top. The energy resolution of 2.0 keV and relative efficiency of 33% at 1.33MeV was achieved in the system with the counting time of 10,800 seconds to reduce statistical uncertainty. The configuration and geometry were maintained throughout the analysis, as previously characterized based on well established protocol of the laboratory.

The standard International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sources were used for calibration (IAEA, 2003). From the counting spectra, the activity concentrations of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K was determined using computer program. The peak corresponds to 1460 keV (^{40}K) for ^{40}K , 1764.5 KeV (Bi-214) for ^{226}Ra and 2614.5 keV (Th-208) for ^{232}Th were considered in arriving at the activity levels (Bqkg^{-1}).

The background counts were determined by counting an empty container of the same dimension as those containing the samples and subtracting from the gross count. The activity concentrations of the samples were determined using the net area under the photopeak's using:

$$A_c = \frac{C_n}{P_\gamma M \epsilon} \quad (2)$$

Where A_c is the activity concentration of the radionuclide in the sample given in Bqkg^{-1} , C_n is the net count rate under the corresponding peak, P_γ is the absolute transition probability of the specific γ -ray, M is the mass of the sample (kg) and ϵ is the detector efficiency at the specific γ -ray energy.

Radiological Parameters

Radium Equivalent (Ra_{eq})

In order to effectively estimate the specific activities of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K , an index known as radium equivalent activity (Ra_{eq}) has been presented. This is to enable a single index to define the radiation hazards associated with mixture of the radionuclides. Ra_{eq} can be calculated from equation (2.8) with an assumption that 370 Bqkg^{-1} of ^{226}Ra , 259 Bqkg^{-1} of ^{232}Th and 4810 Bqkg^{-1} of ^{40}K produce the same gamma-ray dose rate (NEA-OECD, 1979; Ravisankar *et al.*, 2014; Kolo *et al.*, 2015).

$$\text{Ra}_{\text{eq}} = A_{\text{Ra}} + 1.43A_{\text{Th}} + 0.077A_{\text{K}} \quad (3)$$

Where A_{Ra} , A_{Th} and A_{K} are the activity concentrations of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K respectively.

Both external and internal gamma dose from exposure to radon and its daughter nuclides are related to Radium equivalent (Ravisankar *et al.*, 2015).

Annual Effective Dose

The ingestion dose (annual effective dose) due to radionuclides in fruits can be calculated using the following formula;

$$AED = A \times R \times C \quad (4)$$

Where A is the activity concentration of the radionuclide, R, is the radionuclide ingestion dose convection factor in (Sv/kg) and C is the annual intake of fruits. The world value for the radionuclide ingestion dose convection factor and the annual intake of fruits for different age categories is given in table 2.1.

Annual committed effective dose (ACED):

This is a measure of total effective dose of radiation delivered to an individual due to exposure to internal radiation, that is the dose that measures the stochastic health risk due to an intake of radioactive material (Connor, 2019). The annual committed effective dose can be calculated by using the equation below;

$$ACED = AED_T \times C_T \quad (5)$$

Where D_T is the total effective dose, C_T is the total intake of radionuclide.

Hereditary effect; the hereditary effect due to ingestion of radionuclides can be calculated by using the formulae;

$$H_{\text{eff}} = AED_T \times 0.2 \times 10^{-3} \quad (6)$$

Annual Gonadal equivalent dose: The annual Gonad equivalent dose (H) due to the ingestion of fruits can be calculated by using the following formulae:

$$H = w_i \times D_T \quad (7)$$

Where; w_i is the gonad weighted value (0.08) given by ICRP, 2012 and D_T is the total effective dose due to the ingestion of radionuclides.

Excess Lifetime Cancer Risk (ELCR)

The probability of occurrence of cancer in any given population for a given lifetime exposure is measured by excess lifetime cancer risk (ELCR). ELCR was calculated from the estimated annual effective dose D using equation 2.13 (Qureshi *et al.*, 2014):

$$ELCR = D_T \times DL \times RF \quad (8)$$

Where D_T is the total ingestion of radionuclide, DL is the life expectancy of 70 years for adult and 50 years for Children and Infants, and RF is risk factor given to be $5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ mSv}^{-1}$ for stochastic effects (ICRP 2012: Priharti *et al.*, 2016). Thus

$$ELCR = D_T \times \text{Average duration of life (DL)} \times \text{Risk factors (RF)}$$

Radiation Hazard Indices

Radiation hazard indices are used to estimate radiation effects associated with radionuclides in a given media. Thus, gamma and alpha representative indices are used to estimate the level of alpha

and gamma radiation hazards that are associated with the natural radionuclides in specific samples (Tholkappian, 2018). The indices are regarded as screening tools.

Gamma and Alpha absorbed representative index value (I_γ and I_α) can be calculated by;

$$I_\gamma = \frac{A_{Ra}}{150} + \frac{A_{Th}}{100} + \frac{A_K}{1500} \quad (9)$$

$$I_\alpha = \frac{A_{Ra}}{200} \quad (10)$$

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was statistically analyzed using statistical packages such as SPSS, excel, and statistical tools like histogram, frequency.

The possible radiological risks associated with the recorded values were analyzed using equations.

Table 2: The Annual Ingestion C and Ingestion dose R Conversion Factor for Radionuclides and different age categories. (WHO 2011: Priharti, 2016)

AGE CATEGORY	Fruit Ingestion (kg/y)	Radionuclides ($\times 10^{-8}$ Sv/Bq)		
		^{40}K	^{226}Ra	^{232}Th
Infants (1-6 years)	23.01	4.20	96	45
Children (7-13 years)	46.02	1.30	80	29
Adults (>18 years)	69.03	0.62	28	23

Table 3: Specific Activity Concentration of Radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th) in Fruit Samples and their Associated Radiological Parameters

S/N	SAMPLE				ACTIVITY (Bqkg^{-1})				
	SCIENTIFIC NAME	TRADE NAME	SAMPLE CODE	AREA CODE	^{40}K	^{226}Ra	^{232}Th	Ra_{eq} (Bqkg^{-1})	H_{in}
1	<i>Persea Americana</i>	AVOCADO Pear	AP	API	38.17±4.59	7.85±2.18	18.75±5.15	37.6	0.16
2	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	APRICOT	AT	ATA	69.55±4.30	19.70±5.63	15.70±5.36	47.63	0.17
3				GAA	84.73±4.86	16.29±5.76	21.60±5.88	53.7	0.19
4				GAC	59.51±5.21	19.80±4.68	25.67±5.39	61.09	0.22
5	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	GAUVA	GA	GAD	90.55±5.10	13.36±4.29	25.26±5.17	56.45	0.19
6				GAR	148.74±5.19	151.23±3.37	26.08±6.52	199.98	0.95
7	<i>Pyrus communis</i>	PEAR	PR	PRB	210.81±4.87	43.70±2.89	14.89±5.09	81.23	0.33
8				PRE	195.30±4.02	11.27±5.28	20.59±5.48	55.75	0.18
9				PRI	111.89±2.11	4.10±2.95	24.04±4.15	47.09	0.13
10				PRR	76.97±5.48	146.92±4.10	16.92±3.80	177.04	0.88

Table 4: Gamma and Alpha Representative Index Level in the Fruit Samples (Avocado Pear, Apricot, Guava and Pear)

S/N	SAMPLE CODE	ACTIVITY (Bqkg ⁻¹)			I _γ (Bqkg ⁻¹)	I _α (Bqkg ⁻¹)
		⁴⁰ K	²²⁶ Ra	²³² Th		
1	AP	54.66	25.78	19.98	0.408	0.129
2	AT	113.91	108.51	22.01	1.021	0.543
3	GA	89.82	46.75	23.97	0.612	0.234
4	PR	135.49	37.24	20.42	0.543	0.186
TOTAL:		393.88	218.28	86.38	2.584	1.092

Table 5: Estimated Radiological Risk Parameters For Different Age Categories

S/N	SAMPLE		Radiological Parameters					
			⁴⁰ K	²²⁶ Ra	²³² Th	AED _T (μ Svy ⁻¹)	AGED (μ Svy ⁻¹)	ELCR $\times 10^{-3}$
1	API	Infant	36.89	173.4	194.2	404.44	32.36	0.010
		Children	22.84	289.01	250.2	562.08	44.97	0.014
		Adult	16.34	151.73	297.7	465.76	37.26	0.012
2	ATA	Infant	67.21	435.17	162.6	664.95	53.19	0.017
		Children	41.61	725.28	209.5	976.42	78.11	0.024
		Adult	29.77	380.77	249.3	659.81	52.78	0.023
3	GAA	Infant	81.88	359.39	223.7	664.93	53.19	0.017
		Children	50.69	599.73	288.3	938.69	75.09	0.023
		Adult	36.26	314.86	342.9	694.06	55.52	0.024
4	GAC	Infant	57.51	437.37	265.8	760.68	60.85	0.019
		Children	35.02	728.98	342.6	1106.6	88.52	0.028
		Adult	25.47	382.7	407.6	815.73	65.26	0.029
5	GAD	Infant	86.5	295.11	261.6	643.16	51.45	0.016
		Children	54.17	491.86	337.1	883.14	70.65	0.022
		Adult	38.75	258.22	401.1	698.02	55.84	0.024
6	GAR	Infant	143.74	3340.6	270	3754.4	300.35	0.049
		Children	88.99	5567.7	348.1	6004.7	480.38	0.15
		Adult	63.66	2923	414.1	3400.8	272.06	0.012
7	PRB	Infant	203.73	965.31	154.18	1323.22	105.86	0.033
		Children	126.12	1608.86	198.72	1933.7	154.69	0.052
		Adult	90.22	844.65	236.41	1171.28	93.7	0.041
8	PRE	Infant	188.74	248.94	213.19	650.87	52.07	0.022
		Children	116.84	414.92	274.79	806.55	64.52	0.020
		Adult	83.59	217.83	326.91	628.33	50.27	0.022
9	PRI	Infant	108.13	90.57	248.92	447.62	35.81	0.011
		Children	66.94	150.94	320.83	538.71	43.09	0.035
		Adult	47.89	79.25	381.68	508.82	40.71	0.018
10	PRR	Infant	74.39	3245.4	175.19	3494.98	279.59	0.087
		Children	46.05	5409.01	225.81	5680.87	454.47	0.142
		Adult	32.94	2762.42	268.64	3064	245.12	0.011

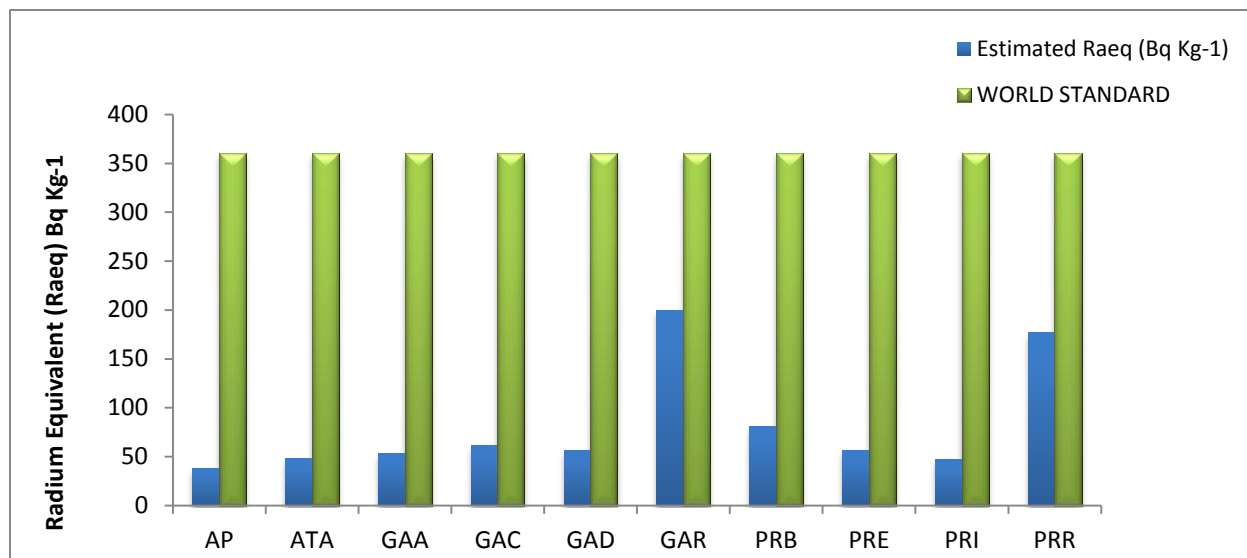


Fig 2: Comparison of Estimated Radium Equivalent (Ra_{eq}) with World Standard

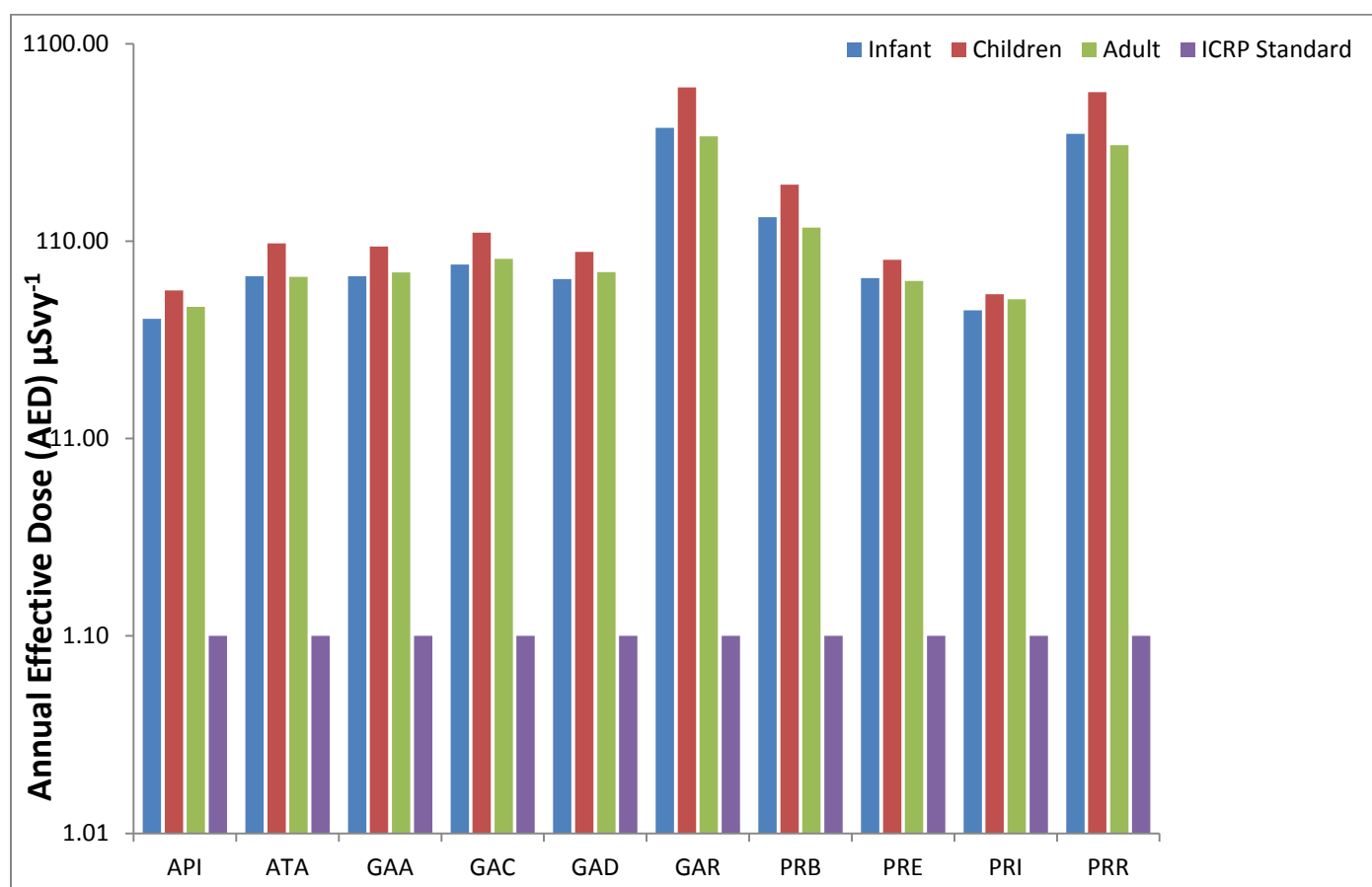


Fig 3: Comparison of Estimated Annual Effective Dose of Infants, Children and Adults with World Standard

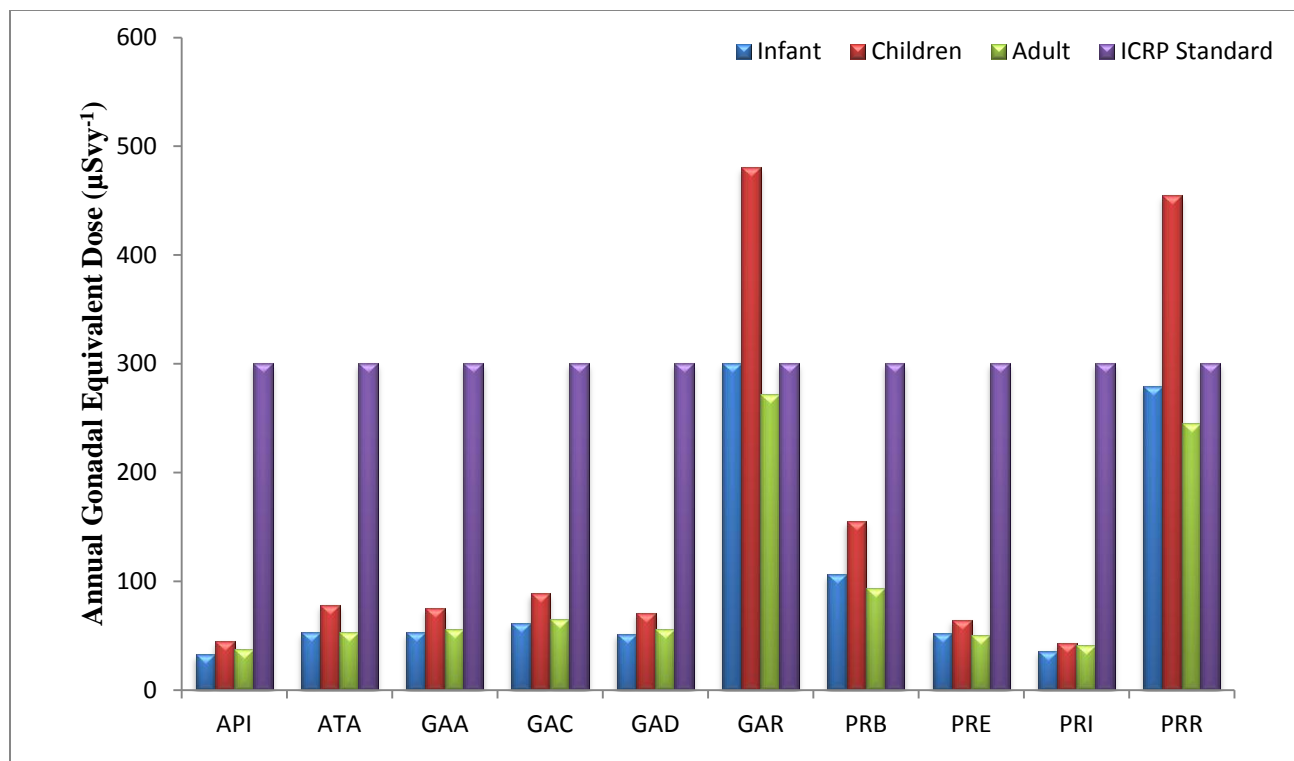


Fig 4: Comparison of Estimated Annual Gonadal Equivalent Dose of Infants, Children and Adults with World Standard

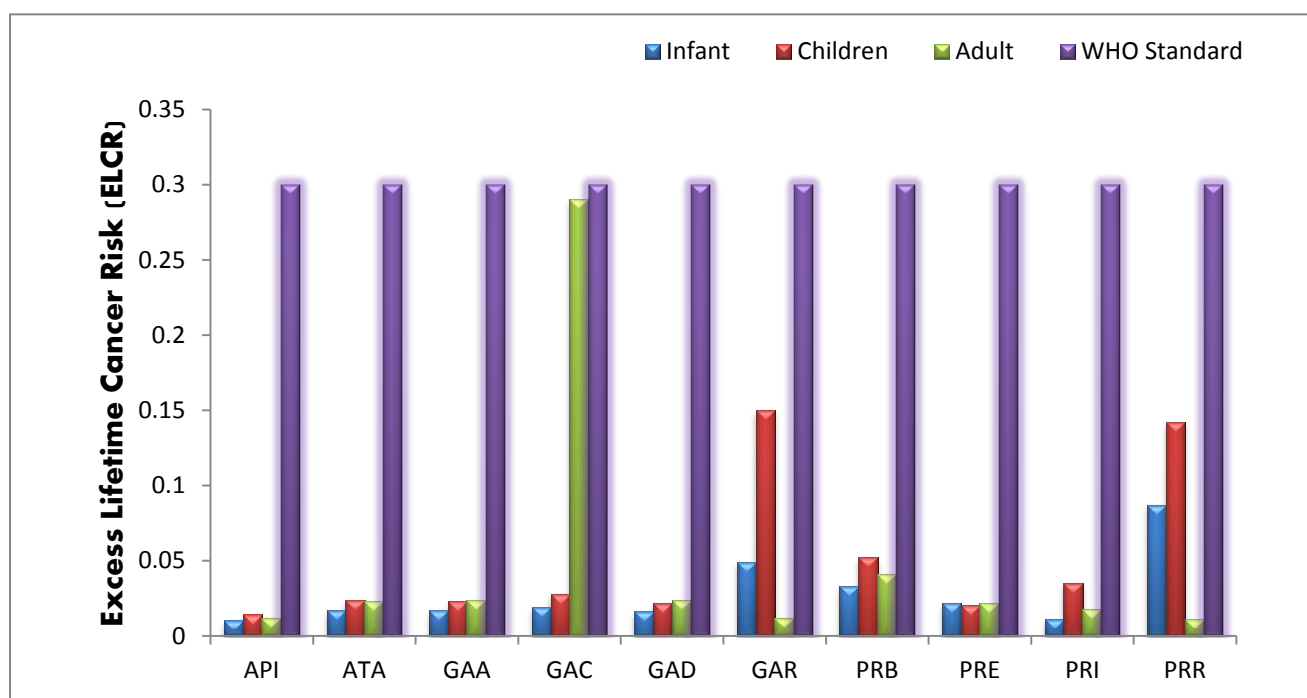


Fig 5: Comparison of Estimated Excess Lifetime Cancer Risk (ELCR) of Infants, Children and Adults with world standard

4. Discussion

Table 3 showed the radionuclides that are present in fruits, and they are ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th , and the activity concentration of the identified radionuclides in various fruit samples. The highest activity concentration value of ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th in Avocado Pear is: $71.15 \pm 4.52 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{40}K , $43.70 \pm 3.44 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{226}Ra and $21.20 \pm 5.75 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{232}Th respectively. In Apricot, the highest activity concentration for the various radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th) are: $212.75 \pm 3.64 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{40}K , $291.20 \pm 3.15 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{226}Ra , and $26.69 \pm 6.24 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ for ^{232}Th . The radionuclide activity concentration in Guava due to ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th are $148.74 \pm 5.15 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$, $151.23 \pm 3.37 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ and $26.08 \pm 6.52 \text{ Bqkg}^{-1}$ respectively.

Table 3 further showed that the activity of ^{40}K in Avocado and Gauva, ^{226}Ra activity in Avocado and Pear, and ^{232}Th activity in Avocado and Gauva from Rivers state has the highest concentration value compared to the same fruits from other parts (states) of Niger Delta. Thus the table showed that the activity concentration of ^{226}Ra was also highest in Apricot, followed by Guava, and Pear. This high activity of ^{226}Ra in the above sampled fruits is due to the rooting system of the fruits and the industrial activities in the region that uses radiation sources in their operations, Avwiri G. O. *et al*, (2013).

The Apricot, Pear and Guava that has highest value of internal hazard index are those that are got from Rivers state, followed by the Guava sample from Edo state. And this is due to the high value of radionuclide activity concentration in these fruits. The table also showed that the estimated internal Hazard index (H_{in}) values ranges from 0.22 to 0.7 with a total value of 2.06 and Radium equivalent (Ra_{eq}) ranges between 58.55 and 148.78 and a total value of 491.85.

Table 4 showed the average activity concentration of radionuclides, Gamma representative index level and Alpha representative index level in the sampled fruits. The average activity concentration for ^{40}K ranges between 54.66 Bqkg^{-1} and 135.49 Bqkg^{-1} , ^{226}Ra ranges from 108.51 Bqkg^{-1} to 21.77 Bqkg^{-1} and ^{232}Th ranges from 23.97 Bqkg^{-1} to 18.90 Bqkg^{-1} . While the total values of the radionuclides ranges from 21.40 Bqkg^{-1} for ^{232}Th to 96.32 Bqkg^{-1} for ^{40}K , the average activity concentration of ^{226}Ra is lower than ^{40}K but higher than ^{232}Th in the sampled fruits.

The Gamma representative index value is highest in Apricot and lowest in Avocado and has the total value of 3.431 Bqkg^{-1} . The Alpha representative index is greater in Apricot, followed thus; Gauva, pear, Avocado. However, the estimated total Alpha representative index value is above the recommended value of 0.1 Bqkg^{-1} by World Health Organization (WHO).

Table 5 showed the estimated radiological parameters; Annual Effective Dose (AED), annual gonadal equivalent dose (AGED) and excess lifetime cancer risk (ELCR) for different age categories from various fruit samples. In more than 60% of the sampled fruits, AED is greater in Infants. Also, the total value of the AED is $2.2341 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$ this means that when all the sampled fruits from different states are consumed, the Annual effective dose value will be above the permissible value of 1mSvy^{-1} ($1000 \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$) set by ICRP. The Excess Lifetime Cancer Risk (ELCR) for Infants, Children and Adults in the study area is presented in the above table. The ELCR due to ingestion of Avocado by Infants, Children and Adults is very low compared to Pear, Guava and Apricot respectively. Variations in the values of the ELCR due to ingestion of

fruits are due to the different conversion factors for different age category. This is in agreement with Priharti, *et al* (2016). Also the internal hazard index for all the fruits from different states in Niger Delta showed that the internal hazard due to Apricot is very high.

Figures 2 to 5 showed the comparison of the estimated radiological parameters with standards.

Figure 2 showed the comparison of estimated radium equivalent value with world standard and all the estimated radium equivalent values for the sampled fruits are below the acceptable limit. That is, they are within the acceptable world value recommended by UNSCEAR.

The comparison of estimated annual effective dose (AED) for different age categories with world standard is shown in figure 3. The AED due to ingestion of Avocado from Imo, Guava from Bayelsa, Delta, and Akwa-Ibom, Pear from Abia, Cross-River, Edo and Imo states are within the world acceptable standard of 1mSvy^{-1} ($1000\ \mu\text{Svy}^{-1}$) set by ICRP. However, the AED due to the ingestion of Apricot from Edo and Rivers, Guava from Edo and Rivers, and Pear from Rivers states are very high compared to the world standard. The values are above the world standard and as such could cause internal radiation exposure if consumed unwittingly. Generally, the average annual effective dose due to ingestion of Apricot, Guava and Pear are above world acceptable limit of $0.29\ \text{mSvy}^{-1}$. These comparisons are necessary in order to show the true radiological conditions (dangers or benefits) associated with the sampled fruits from the Niger Delta. From this result, the consumption of Apricot, Guava and Pear, mostly, by children should be minimized to avoid over-exposure.

Figures 4 showed the comparison of estimated average annual gonadal equivalent dose (AGED) for different age categories with world standard. In all the sampled fruits, the AGED for infants and adults are within (below) the world acceptable limit. But the average AGED value in Children due to ingestion of Apricot is above the world standard. This high level of annual gonadal equivalent dose in children is due to the high level of activity of radionuclides (Potassium-40, Radium-226 and Thorium-232) in Apricot. However, this further implies that children should avoid excessive consumption of Apricot to avoid internal exposure.

Figure 5 showed the comparison between estimated excess lifetime cancer risk (ELCR) due to the radionuclide concentration in the fruits with world standard. All the estimated excess lifetime cancer risk ELCR due to the ingestion of various sampled fruits are lower than the acceptable limits with comparison to WHO standard of 0.3

However, the estimated radiological parameters from the activity concentration of the radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th) in sampled fruits are compared with the world standards and the results indicates that the value of radiological parameters due to ingestion of various fruits from Niger Delta by different age categories are affected by the age and type of fruit consumed. The radionuclide activity concentration in Apricot is very high, then followed by Guava and Pear. These high values of activity concentration of the radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th) in Apricot, Guava and Pear are attributed to their rooting system and to technically enhanced naturally occurring radionuclides (TENORMs) released into the Niger Delta environment by the oil and gas industries and fertilizer companies in the region. Thus, the activities of these industries in one way or the other increase the concentration of radionuclides in the environment by increasing background radiation. The overall results of estimated radiation hazard indices and associated

potential radiological risk of some fruits that are produced in Niger Delta are higher than the permissible world standard. Hence there is need to safeguard the Niger Delta environment from further degradation.

Conclusion

The Assessment of radionuclides in some fruits from Niger Delta Nigeria was investigated and the result showed as follows:

1. The natural radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th) are present in the fruits that are produced in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.
2. The activity concentration of ^{40}K is higher than ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th in fruits that are produced in Niger Delta.
3. Apricot, also commonly called monkey kolanut has a very high activity concentration, thus its annual gonadal equivalent dose, internal hazard index, Alpha representative index and annual effective dose for various age categories are much higher than the world acceptable limits for fruits according to UNSCEAR, WHO and other radiation regulatory agencies.
4. The annual gonadal effective dose in different age categories due to ingestion of Apricot, Guava and Pear produced in Edo and Rivers states are higher than the world recommended acceptable limit. While the annual gonadal effective dose of other fruits such as Avocado for different age categories, from the Niger Delta are lower than acceptable limit for fruits.
5. The annual effective doses of some sampled fruits are below the world acceptable limit. Also, the estimated values of excess lifetime cancer risk for different age categories due to ingestion of fruits from Niger Delta are below (within) the acceptable limit.
6. The activity concentration of ^{232}Th in each fruit is lowest. That is, the activity concentration of ^{232}Th is low when compared with the activity concentration and radiological parameters of ^{226}Ra and ^{40}K in each fruit.
7. The estimated average of the radiological parameters for all the sampled fruits is lower than the world standard in each case. The implication is that if all the fruits from the Niger Delta are consumed by an individual the value of the excess lifetime cancer risk is very small compared to the world standard. Also, the radium equivalent is below the world standard.
8. The activity concentrations of the identified radionuclides ^{40}K , ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th in Apricot, Guava and Pear that are produced in the Niger Delta, Nigeria are very high.

Therefore, further studies should be carried out on the Radionuclide content of the soil where those fruits were collected.

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