

Unfermented and fermented rooibos teas (*Aspalathus linearis*) increase plasma total antioxidant capacity in healthy humans

abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the effect of drinking rooibos tea (*Aspalathus linearis*) on total antioxidant capacity (TAC), lipid triacylglycerols, cholesterol and glycaemia plasma levels in humans. In vitro, unfermented rooibos tea displayed a 28% higher value of TRAP than did the fermented beverage. An acute intervention study, cross-over design, was performed, with 15 healthy volunteers who consumed 500 ml of either water, unfermented or fermented rooibos teas. Plasma antioxidant capacity increased significantly with both teas, reaching a peak at 1 h post-consumption (+6.6%, $p < 0.05$ fermented tea; +2.9%, $p < 0.01$ unfermented tea). No changes in triacylglycerols, cholesterol or uric acid were observed with any of the treatments. A transitory increase in glycaemia at 30 min was linked to glucose upload. The data show that rooibos teas represent a source of dietary antioxidants in humans.