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Title: Benzoate and Synthetic Color Risk Assessment of Fast Food Sauces Served at Street Food Joints of Lucknow, India

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Abstract: Quality compliance of benzoate and food colors in the two common fast food accessories, namely tomato and chilli sauces, served at Street Food Joints (SFJs) has been evaluated and compared with the counterpart branded products. Both sauces served at SFJs employed excessive amounts of benzoic acid in comparison with branded products ($p < 0.05$). In spite of ban, presence of artificial colors such as Amaranth, Carmoisine, Erythrosine, Ponceau 4R, Sunset Yellow and Tartrazine were noted in a vast majority of SFJ sauce samples. All branded sauces, however, adhered to the prescribed limit of benzoate and contained no artificial color. Intake estimates for benzoate and one of the colors, Sunset Yellow, in high consumers among children are likely to saturate 33 and 20% of the ADI at 95th percentile levels, respectively, which appears to be on higher side considering intake from a single commodity. Street Food Joints (SFJs) cater to the demand of floating domestic/foreign tourist populations and serve as a source of employment generation. This sector needs some assistance to enable them to survive in the competitive markets but not at the cost of quality. Effective risk communication and food safety awareness measures designed for street vending outlets are required so that such lapses of street vending outlets could be minimized.

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