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Chantal Brossard, Maud Petitot, Cecile Barron, Marie-Anne Legoux, Evelyne Paty, Sandra Denery-Papini, Valérie Micard

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Changes in pasta protein network induced by drying and their relationship to protein digestibility and allergenicity

BROSSARD C. 1 *, PETITOT M.2,3, BARRON C 2, LEGOUX M.A. 1, PATY E.4, DENERY S.1,** and MICARD V.3

1. UR 1268 Biopolymères, Interactions, Assemblages, INRA, F-44316 NANTES
2. UMR1208 Ingénierie des Agropolymères et Technologies Emergentes, INRA – UMI – SupAgro – CIRAD, F-34060 MONTPELLIER
3. Crecerpal, Panzani, F-13013 MARSEILLE
4. CHU Necker. Pnomo Allergologie Infantile. 14 Rue de Sevres – F-75015 PARIS
**: presenting author * e-mail: brossard@nantes.inra.fr

Pasta is a popular food which possesses interesting nutritional quality but may trigger allergic reaction in sensitized people. Many questions remain open for research area, including the relationship between pasta processing, pasta structure and resulting nutritional properties. The purpose of this study was to characterise the structure of pasta dried at different conditions and to relate it to the in vitro digestibility and allergenicity of proteins. Four drying profiles were studied: Low Temperature 55°C (LT), High Temperature 70°C (HT), Very High Temperature 90°C applied either from the beginning of the cycle, when the moisture content of spaghetti was high (20%) (VHT) or at the end of the drying cycle, when the moisture content of pasta was low (12%) (VHT_LM).

**Methods**

**Proteins:** Size Exclusion HPLC (SE-HPLC) after protein extraction with SDS (detergent), then with DTE (reducer) in dried and cooked pasta (Fig. 1).

**Microstructure:** Confocal Laser Scanning Microscope of cross sectioned cooked pasta after protein staining with fuchsine acid (Fig. 2).

**Protein digestibility:** In vitro digestion of cooked pasta composed of a buccal phase (α-amylose, pH7), a gastric phase (pepsin, PH2) and an intestinal phase (pancreatin, pH7). Protein hydrolysis was evaluated by measuring the increase in free amine groups in protein extracts (Fig. 3).

**Protein allergenicity:** Juices from in vitro bucco-gastric or pancreatic digests were used to inhibit recognition of wheat proteins by IgE from a pool of allergic patients (table 1).

**Protein Solubility**

![Protein Solubility Graph](Image)

Dried pasta are different but Cooking led to increased protein aggregation, especially for LT and HT pasta

Cooked pasta are similar

Cooking led to an increased protein aggregate, for especially LT and HT pasta

Dried pasta are different

⇒ Increasing drying temperatures led to increased protein aggregation (lower protein solubility in SDS).

⇒ Aggregation probably occurred through disulphide bonds (increased DTE-soluble fraction) and through other covalent bonds (presence of insoluble proteins) with VHT drying profiles.

Protein digestibility in Cooked Pasta

![Protein Digestibility Graph](Image)

VHT_LM decreased significantly protein digestibility (by 10%) and increased allergenicity of intestinal digests. This could not be explained by a different protein spatial distribution at a microscopic level. VHT_LM cooked pasta presented a higher proportion a high molecular weight protein aggregates (data not shown) which may have contributed to this lower digestibility and higher allergenicity. Both gluten and soluble proteins seemed to be involved. It appears that applying VHT at the end of the drying cycle led to the formation of specific protein aggregates.

**Allergenicity of Digests from Cooked Pasta**

Table 1. Competitive ELISA with digestion juices from cooked pasta and a pool of sera from allergic patients to wheat. Percentage of inhibition obtained with digestion juices at the end of the gastric phase (5 minutes by α-amylose and 3 hours by pancreatin) and at the end of the intestinal phase (end of gastric phase + 3 hours by pancreatin) are presented.

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![Digestibility Table](Image)
d3 remplacer 20 ppm
gluten par 20 ppm

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