

NORM (^{222}Rn) Level and Its Associated Effective Dose in Selected Carbonated Drinks Sold in Lagos Traffic, Southwestern Nigeria.

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to measure radon (^{222}Rn) concentrations, a decay product of long-lived naturally occurring radioactive elements, in different carbonated drinks sold in Lagos-traffic, Nigeria and to calculate the annual effective dose. Radon concentration in the studied samples was measured using RAD7 detector, an electric radon detector. The lowest radon concentrations in the carbonated drink samples ranged from $0.037 \pm 0.016 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$ to $0.092 \pm 0.009 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$, with an average value of $0.071 \pm 0.012 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$; this contributed an annual effective dose of $0.015 \pm 0.0013 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$ to $0.038 \pm 0.0025 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$, with an average value of $0.029 \pm 0.0016 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$. The highest radon concentrations in the carbonated drink samples ranged from $0.167 \pm 0.009 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$ to $0.190 \pm 0.013 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$, with an average value of $0.182 \pm 0.009 \text{ Bq.l}^{-1}$; this contributed an annual effective dose of $0.069 \pm 0.0011 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$ to $0.078 \pm 0.0009 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$, with an average value of $0.075 \pm 0.0011 \text{ mSv.y}^{-1}$. The results of this study revealed that the presence of radon in the studied samples were less than the permitted maximum radon concentration level set as standard according to the World Health Organization and other radiation protection regulatory bodies. It can thus be argued that there is no significant radiological risk to the teeming population of Lagos from radon ingestion by consuming carbonated drinks in the studied locations.

Keywords: annual effective dose, carbonated drinks, Lagos traffic, radon, RAD7.

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I. Introduction

The presence of naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) has been recognized over the years with a concentration higher than the radiological reference assigned by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to be hazardous to the living organism [UNSCEAR, 2000b]. The whole environment we live constitutes of these radionuclides of natural origin, thus naturally occurring radiations are present in the soil, water, air, floors/walls of our homes, food consumed by animals/human and drinks [IAEA, 1989]. Long-lived radioactive elements such as uranium, thorium potassium and any of their decay products, such as radium and radon are examples of these naturally occurring radioactive materials.

The term NORM exists to distinguish natural radioactive materials from anthropogenic sources of radioactive material, such as those produced by nuclear power and used in nuclear medicine, where incidentally the radioactive properties of the material may be what makes it useful [USNRC, 2015]. However, from the perspective of radiation doses to human, such a distinction is completely arbitrary. Radium-226 is the fifth decay product of uranium-238 that decays into radon-222 which is the heaviest gaseous element in the natural decay series of uranium, thorium and actinium [USEPA, 2016]. Radon is a radioactive, colorless, odorless, tasteless noble gas which results from natural radioactive decay of uranium, radium and thorium that exist everywhere in the trace of the rocks and soils of the earth's crust [Gillmore and Jabarivasal, 2010]. It is represented with symbol Rn and atomic number 86.

Radon occurs in nature as an intermediate step in the normal radioactive decay chains through which thorium and uranium slowly decay into lead and other short-lived radioactive elements; radon itself is the immediate decay product of radium, characterized by naturally emitting alpha particles [USEPA, 2016]. Naturally occurring isotopes of radon are radon (^{222}Rn) which is produced from the decay of ^{238}U having natural abundance of about 99.3% of the total uranium within the Earth's crust, thoron (^{220}Rn) which is produced in nature during the decay of ^{232}Th and actinon (^{219}Rn) which is formed during the decay of ^{235}U [Gillmore *et al.*, 2010]. The most stable and abundant isotope of radon is (^{222}Rn) which has a half-life $Rn(T_{1/2}) = 3.82 \text{ days}$. It decays by emitting an (α) particle of 5.49 MeV and creates radioactive daughters [Khattak *et al.*, 2011]. The following natural nuclear decays are noticeably valid in this respect:



As it can be seen from equation (1) to (7), the natural decay series consists of radioactive isotopes and isobars, with the emissions of energetic alpha- and beta-particles to the environment or living tissue.

Radon can be dissolved and transported into the water by pores in rock and soil. The activity concentration of ²²⁶Ra in carbonated drinks can vary considerably since it depends on the origin of the water used in the production of the drinks among other chemical factors [Palomo *et al.*, 2007]. The associated health hazard gives rise to a radiation dose which results from either inhalation or ingestion. Thus, radon gas can be transmitted from water to the air, and when inhaled, this leads to the exposure of the lungs to radiation risk and ingestion of water containing radon is considered to directly impact the stomach [Khurshed, 2000].

Under normal conditions and considering the gaseous nature of radon, it is easily inhaled, therefore, considered a health hazard [USEPA, 2016]. It is often the single largest contributor to an individual's background radiation dose, but due to local differences in geology [Kusky, 2003]. Radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer, after cigarette smoking, causing 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States [USEPA, 2003; USEPA, 2012]. While radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer, it is the number one cause among non-smokers, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's estimates [USEPA, 2012].

It has been reported that Nigeria is the fourth market in the world with the biggest consumers of carbonated drinks in the world coming after the United State of America, China and Mexico [Euromonitor International, 2017]. It was also reported that Nigeria's fast-growing population brings with it a continuing demand for carbonated drinks, especially as the climate is quite hot. It was also reported that 86.5% of Nigerians consumes carbonated soft drink [NBS, 2010]. Lagos State, being a port city and the most populous city in Nigeria and on the African continent, is leading with the consumption rate of carbonated drink by its populace in Nigeria and Africa at large. Lagos surpassed Cairo in size in 2012 to become the largest city of Africa [Campbell, 2012].

A study has shown nearly 16% of children in Ibadan, a popular town in Southwestern Nigeria, aged 6-18 months were given soft drinks at least once per day as a weaning drink [Bankole *et al.*, 2006]. Thus, the aim of this present research work is to measure radon concentrations in different types of carbonated drinks that are sold in Lagos-traffic, southwestern, Nigeria and calculate the annual effective dose in all samples collected.

II. Theory

For $N(t)$ ²²²Rn nuclei at time t , the number of ²²²Rn which decay in time t is:

$$\frac{dN(t)}{dt} = -\lambda \cdot N(t) = -\frac{1}{\tau} N(t) \tag{8}$$

where:

$\tau = \frac{1}{\lambda}$ = lifetime of sample of ²²²Rn nuclei;

λ = decay or disintegration constant;

$N(t)$ = number of nuclei at time t .

Also, $N(t) = N(0)e^{-\lambda t} = N_0e^{-t/\tau}$ (9)

where:

$N(0) = N_0$ = number of radioactive nuclei at time $t = 0$ (i.e., initially)

Further, we have:

$$N(t) = N_0e^{-\lambda T_{1/2}} \tag{10}$$

$$T_{1/2} = \text{half-life of } {}^{222}\text{Rn} = \frac{\ln(\frac{1}{2})}{-\lambda} = \frac{\ln(2)}{\lambda} = 0.693/\lambda = 0.693\tau \tag{11}$$

The strength or activity $c(t)$ of ²²²Rn source is the number of decays that take place per second. That is,

$$c(t) = \frac{-dN}{dt} = \lambda N = \lambda N_0e^{-\lambda t} \tag{12}$$

The units of $c(t)$ are:

$$\text{Curie} = \text{Ci} = 3.7 \times 10^{10} \text{ decays/s}$$

$$\text{Becquerel (S.I.)} = \text{Bq} = 1 \text{ decay/s.}$$

The concentration of ²²²Rn (C_{Rn}) is given by:

$$C_{Rn} = \frac{\text{Activity of } ^{222}\text{Rn sample}}{\text{Volume of } ^{222}\text{Rn sample}} = \frac{c(t)}{V} \quad (13)$$

where:

$$c(t) = \text{activity};$$

$$V = \text{volume (in litre L or m}^3\text{)}.$$

Hence, the unit of concentration of ²²²Rn to be measured are *Bq.l⁻¹ or Bq.m⁻³*.

The Radiation Dose (D) is defined as:

$$D = \frac{\text{energy absorbed (J)}}{\text{mass of absorber (living /non -living) (Kg)}} = \frac{E}{M} \quad (14)$$

The SI unit of D is *gray (Gy)*, 1 Gy = 1 J/Kg.

The quality factor (Q) of the alpha particles from the ²²²Rn radiation is given by:

$$Q = \frac{\text{biological effect of 1 Gy o } ^{222}\text{Rn radiation}}{\text{biological effect of 1 Gy of 200-KeV X-rays}} \quad (15)$$

It has been observed that Q is proportional to *D₀* (the Dose Conversion Factor).

The effective dose (H) is the radiation dose that can cause radiation damage to living tissue. The SI unit of H is the Sievert (Sv). H is defined as:

$$H = Q \times D \quad (16)$$

The corresponding rates are:

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = Q \times \frac{dD}{dt}, \quad (17)$$

where:

$\frac{dH}{dt}$ = effective dose rate = annual effective dose (or monthly or weekly or daily effective dose);

$\frac{dD}{dt}$ = dose rate = annual dose (or monthly or weekly or daily dose).

The unit of $\frac{dH}{dt}$ are: (i) *Sv.yr⁻¹*; (ii) *mSv.yr⁻¹*; (iii) *mSv.hr⁻¹*; etc.

III. Materials, Method and Measurements

3.1 The Study Area

Lagos was chosen in this study due to its highly industrialized and population nature. Lagos is a state in Southwestern Nigeria with geographical coordinates of 6°27.244' North and 3°23.68' East. Located near the equator, Lagos has only a slight seasonal temperature variation, with high temperatures ranging 28.3 – 32.9°C [NOAA, 1990]. Lagos has a population estimated at 21 million in 2016, which makes it the largest city in Africa [World Population Review, 2019].

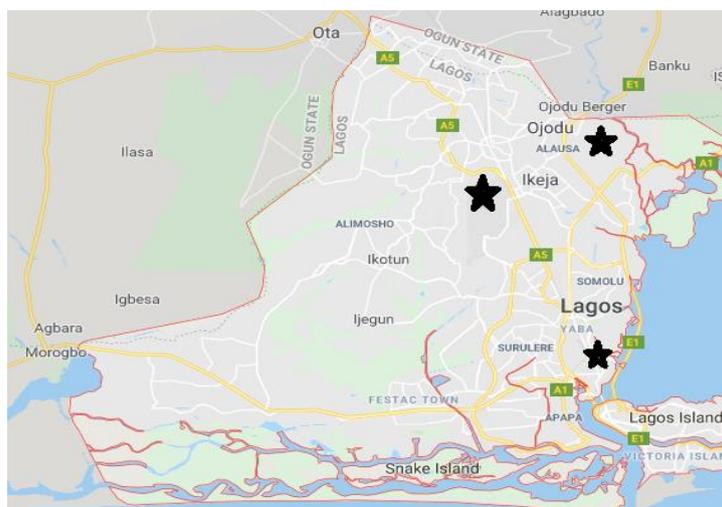


Fig 1: Map of Lagos State

★ An indicator of samples collection metropolis (Ikeja, Ojodu and Yaba in Lagos).

3.2 Samples Collection

Forty-two samples of carbonated drinks (14 different brands, 3 samples each) were purchased from various locations in Lagos-traffic at Ikeja, Ojodu and Yaba metropolis in February 2019. Commonly purchased and consumed carbonated drinks in the city of Lagos were carefully selected as samples for this study.

3.3 Samples Preparation and Measurement

Radon concentration in the samples for this study was measured using RAD7 radon detector (DurrIDGE Co., USA), an electric radon detector that is connected to RAD H₂O accessory for a period of one month [DurrIDGE, 2010]. RAD H₂O simply means radon in water with the setup shown in figure 2.



Fig 2: Arrangement of apparatus for measuring radon content in the carbonated drinks.

The RAD7 detector is truly versatile radon and thoron detector used by research scientists and professionals worldwide. It comes complete with a built-in air pump, rechargeable batteries, and a detachable wireless printer. The radon detector was used to measure the concentrations of radon in the carbonated drinks by connecting the detector to a bubbling kit, this is to enable gas to be released from the samples under study into the air existing in a closed loop. 250mL of each carbonated drink was taken into a radon-tight bottle connected to a glass bulb, this will ensure absorption of available moisture because it contains calcium, it will also ensure a firm connection to the detection chamber. The detection chamber (radon monitor) acts as a scintillator to detect alpha particles. The air was then circulated in the closed circuit for a period of 10 minutes to ensure uniformity in the mixture of radon with the air, the resulting alpha was then recorded [DurrIDGE, 2010].

3.4 Annual Effective Dose Estimation

The annual effective dose (D_{AE}) to an individual from the intake of ²²²Rn radionuclide through the intake of carbonated drinks is calculated using the relation [UNSCEAR, 2000a]:

$$D_{AE} (mSv \cdot y^{-1}) = C_{Ra} (Bq \cdot l^{-1}) \times I_{CD} (l \cdot yr^{-1}) \times D_c \quad (18)$$

Where D_{AE} is the annual effective dose due to ingestion of radionuclide from consumption of carbonated drink; C_{Ra} is the concentration of ²²²Rn in the carbonated drink; I_{CD} is the annual ingestion of carbonated drink and D_c is the dose conversion factor for intake of ²²²Rn given as 0.005 mSv [UNSCEAR, 1999]. The net annual consumption of carbonated drinks over nearly two hundred (200) nations is said to be 552 billion litres, this amounts to 82.5 litres of carbonated drinks consumption per person annually [Zenith International, 2008]. The detection limit of the device used was 0.004 Bq.l⁻¹; hence, BDL simply means below the detection limit.

IV. Results and Discussions

The results of the measured radon concentration were reported in Bq.l⁻¹ and Bq.m⁻³ as shown in Table 1; the annual effective dose values in the selected carbonated drink samples are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Concentrations of radon in carbonated drink samples for the present study

Samples Code	Trade Name	Flavour	Radon Concentration (Bq.l ⁻¹)				Radon Concentration (Bq.m ⁻³)			
			S1	S2	S3	Average	S1	S2	S3	Average
S1	Mirinda	Orange	0.092±0.009	0.084±0.013	0.037±0.016	0.071±0.012	92.00±9.45	84.00±13.30	37.00±16.91	71.00±12.67
S2	Fanta	Orange	0.063±0.015	0.081±0.080	0.077±0.011	0.074±0.036	63.00±15.03	81.00±80.16	77.00±11.30	73.67±36.15
S3	Fanta	Apple	0.168±0.013	0.019±0.010	0.149±0.009	0.112±0.010	168.00±13.32	19.00±10.41	149.00±10.33	112.00±10.13
S4	Savanna	Lemon	BDL	BDL	BDL	-	BDL	BDL	BDL	-
S5	Savanna	Orange	0.213±0.007	0.146±0.012	0.174±0.010	0.178±0.009	213.00±7.90	146.00±12.90	174.00±10.61	177.67±9.51
S6	La Casera	Apple	0.160±0.014	0.215±0.012	0.163±0.006	0.179±0.010	160.00±14.21	215.00±12.07	163.00±6.09	179.33±10.94
S7	Pepsi	Cola	0.133±0.007	0.116±0.013	0.125±0.010	0.125±0.009	133.00±7.05	116.00±13.74	125.00±10.82	124.67±9.33
S8	Sprite	Lemon-lime	0.125±0.002	0.119±0.010	0.123±0.011	0.122±0.007	125.00±2.98	119.00±10.32	123.00±11.72	122.33±7.16
S9	CocaCola	Cola	0.081±0.010	0.073±0.016	0.076±0.008	0.077±0.012	81.00±10.01	73.00±16.64	76.00±8.24	76.67±12.42
S10	CocaCola	Zero-sugar	0.097±0.018	0.106±0.013	0.084±0.011	0.096±0.013	97.00±18.32	106.00±13.01	84.00±11.21	95.67±13.58
S11	Smooov	Chapman	0.201±0.011	0.113±0.006	0.172±0.014	0.162±0.009	201.00±11.85	113.00±6.82	172.00±14.52	162.00±9.29
S12	Seven Up	Lemon-lime	0.167±0.009	0.190±0.013	0.188±0.013	0.182±0.009	167.00±9.07	190.00±13.45	188.00±13.80	181.67±8.35
S13	Bigi	Cola	0.107±0.016	0.110±0.002	0.110±0.016	0.109±0.008	107.00±16.39	110.00±2.72	110.00±16.49	109.00±8.14
S14	Bigi	Lemon-lime	BDL	BDL	BDL	-	BDL	BDL	BDL	-
		Mean	0.125	0.105	0.114	0.115	125.00	105.17	114.00	114.72

*BDL – Below Detection Limit

Table 2: Annual effective dose due to the concentration of radon in studied samples

Samples Code	Trade Name	Flavour	Annual Effective Dose Estimation (mSv.y ⁻¹)			
			S1	S2	S3	Average
S1	Mirinda	Orange	0.038±0.0025	0.035±0.0017	0.015±0.0013	0.029±0.0016
S2	Fanta	Orange	0.026±0.0042	0.033±0.0021	0.032±0.0020	0.030±0.0031
S3	Fanta	Apple	0.069±0.0035	0.008±0.0009	0.061±0.0017	0.046±0.0022
S4	Savanna	Lemon	-	-	-	-
S5	Savanna	Orange	0.088±0.0015	0.060±0.0021	0.072±0.0021	0.073±0.0018
S6	La Casera	Apple	0.066±0.0062	0.089±0.0038	0.067±0.0029	0.074±0.0041
S7	Pepsi	Cola	0.055±0.0027	0.048±0.0021	0.052±0.0032	0.051±0.0025
S8	Sprite	Lemon-lime	0.052±0.0036	0.049±0.0048	0.051±0.0028	0.050±0.0034
S9	CocaCola	Cola	0.033±0.0061	0.030±0.0026	0.031±0.0021	0.032±0.0042
S10	CocaCola	Zero-sugar	0.040±0.0046	0.044±0.0031	0.035±0.0035	0.039±0.0036
S11	Smooov	Chapman	0.083±0.0029	0.047±0.0052	0.071±0.0026	0.067±0.0038
S12	Seven Up	Lemon-lime	0.069±0.0011	0.078±0.0009	0.078±0.0013	0.075±0.0011
S13	Bigi	Cola	0.044±0.0038	0.045±0.0032	0.045±0.0054	0.045±0.0040
S14	Bigi	Lemon-lime	-	-	-	-
		Mean	0.052	0.043	0.047	0.047

The lowest radon concentrations in the carbonated drink samples collected were recorded in samples S1 (Mirinda, orange flavour) whiranged from 0.037 ±0.016 Bq.l⁻¹ to 0.092 ± 0.009 Bq.l⁻¹, with an average value of 0.071 ± 0.012 Bq.l⁻¹; this contributed an annual effective dose of 0.015 ± 0.0013 mSv.y⁻¹ to 0.038 ± 0.0025 mSv.y⁻¹, with an average value of 0.029 ± 0.0016 mSv.y⁻¹.

The highest radon concentrations in the carbonated drink samples collected were recorded in samples S12 (seven-up, lemon-lime flavour) which ranged from 0.167 ±0.009 Bq.l⁻¹ to 0.190 ± 0.013 Bq.l⁻¹, with an average value of 0.182 ± 0.009 Bq.l⁻¹, this contributed an annual effective dose of 0.069 ± 0.0011 mSv.y⁻¹ to 0.078 ± 0.0009 mSv.y⁻¹, with an average value of 0.075 ± 0.0011 mSv.y⁻¹.

Varying concentrations of radon were in all samples of carbonated drink collected (see Tables 1 and 2) except for samples S4 (savanna, lemon flavour) and S14 (Bigi, lemon-lime flavour) which were not detected by the detector.

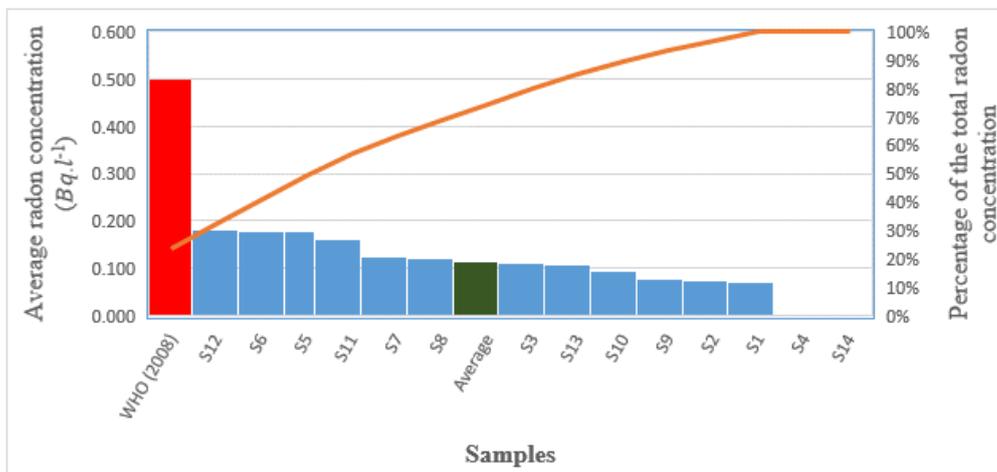


Figure 3: Pareto chart of the distribution of radon concentrations in the studied carbonated drinks in descending order of frequency, with a cumulative line on a secondary axis as a percentage of the total radon concentrations.

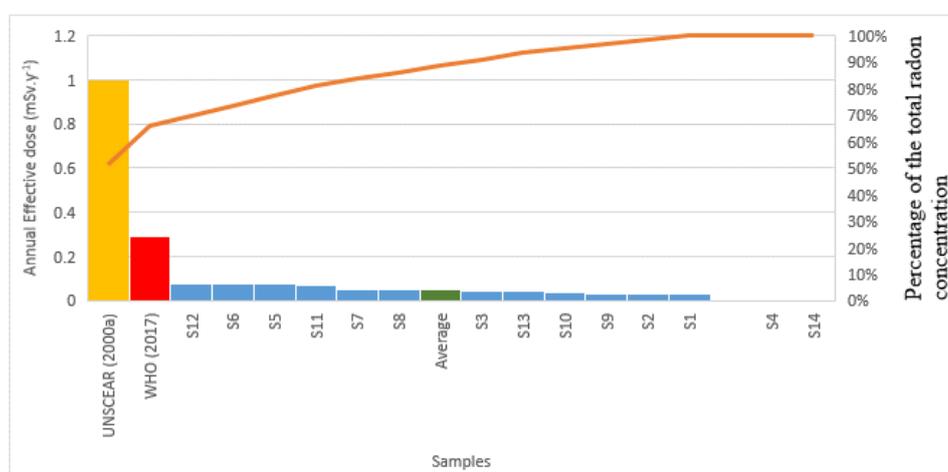


Figure 4: Pareto chart of the annual effective dose due to ingestion radon via consumption of studied carbonated drinks in descending order of frequency, with a cumulative line on a secondary axis as a percentage of the total annual effective dose.

V. Conclusion

The values obtained for the concentration of radon in the present study showed that radon is present in all studied samples except for samples S4 (savanna, lemon flavour) and S14 (Bigi, lemon-lime flavour) which were not detected by the detector. However, the presence of radon in the studied samples were less than the permitted maximum concentration level set as standard according to the World Health Organization and other radiation protection regulatory bodies. The values reported for radon concentrations in carbonated drink samples for the present study were lower than the maximum allowed concentration standard of 0.5 Bq.l^{-1} for carbonated drinks [WHO, 2008]. Also, the results of the annual effective dose due to ingestion of radon from the consumption of carbonated drinks in studied samples were lower than the estimated world average of 1 mSv.y^{-1} [UNSCEAR, 2000a] and lower than the reported mean annual effective dose of 0.29 mSv.y^{-1} [WHO, 2017]. The average annual effective dose reported for the studied samples is 4.7% of the estimated World average value. Hence, in conclusion, it can be argued that there is no significant radiological risk to the teeming population of Lagos from radon ingestion by consuming carbonated drinks in the studied locations.

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