

Cashew nut *Anacardium occidentale* from Mexico source of ω 3 and ω 6

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Cashew nuts *Anacardium occidentale* is a native tree from the tropical zones from Brazil, nowadays widely distributed in the continent from south Mexico to Peru and Brazil, although its high availability on these countries, people some times do not consume them, however some places commercialized them as snack foodstuff and population consumed them very seldom, not on a regular diet. Cashew nut specie do not request determine kind of soil or special care to grow, roots are not deep, trees can be found everywhere in tropical regions. The purpose of this study is to assess essential fatty acids and to inform population the benefits provide by essential fatty acids ω 3 and ω 6 to human health. Cashew nuts samples were recollected at Morelos State Mexico on March 2011. Total lipids were analyzed by oil extraction with petroleum ether in a Soxhlet apparatus and fatty acids assessed with a gas chromatography entitled with a fused silica capillary column with helium as a carrier gas. Data obtained was: total lipids 50.20%; saturated fatty acid (C18:0) 8.4%; monounsaturated fatty acid (C18:1) 50.94%; polyunsaturated fatty acids (C18:3 ω 3) 2.51%, (C18:3 ω 6) 1.70%. The highest fatty acid present in Cashew nuts was the oleic acid, this increase the HDL cholesterol in blood that benefits the vascular system. Intake of this cashew nut might reduce the risk for cardiovascular diseases.

Key words: cashew nuts, oleic acid, cardiovascular diseases.