Complementary food patterns among Infants and young children in Houeyogbe and Bopa districts in southern Benin, West Africa

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Background
The inadequate complementary feeding practices within infant young children is one of the main factors associated with the high level (43%) of stunted children noticed in Benin despite the diversity of local food resources. The objective of this research is to identify and characterize complementary foods given to infants and young children of 6 to 23 months old and by exploiting the potential of local biodiversity and traditional foods to improve the nutritional status and health of target groups.

Methodology
The study was conducted for 2 months during dery saison (November and December 2013), one of the major seasons. Dietary intake of infants was estimated using two non-consecutive 24-hour recalls. The recipes reconstitution was carried out among a subsample of 219 mothers selected according to their indigenous knowledge of food processing and cooking after three repetitions.

Results
The main complementary foods recorded are porridge of fermented or non fermented maize and mixed local resources such as starchy staples from cereals and tubers (maize, rice, cassava, potatoes,…) accompanied with traditional sauces based on red palm nut oil or green leafy vegetables. Specifically, porridge of fermented or not fermented maize like “Koko” (fon language) or “Godo” (Sahouè language) prepared at home are often the very common foods recorded. Other types of complementary foods (CF) are composed of mixed local resources such as starchy staples from cereals and tubers (maize, rice, cassava, potatoes,…) accompanied with traditional sauces based on red palm nut oil or green leafy vegetables (Corchorus spp, Amarantus spp, Solanum spp, Launana taraxacifolia, Talinum triangulare, Telfairia occidentalis, Cleome gynandra, Struchium sparganophora, Moringa oleifera, …) or legumes (beans, soybean, …) and scarcely animals proteins such as eggs, fish. These are the common family foods.

Conclusion
The most CF are not specific foods given to infant and young children in Benin. There is a notable absence of fresh fruit in the records. This may reflect actual dietary intake which will be confirmed by the ongoing analysis.

Young Child consuming pate of maize with sauce based on red palm nut oil and leafy vegetable