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**PaperTitle** **Fermented Foods And Beverages- Are They Functional?**

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**ABSTRACT**

Some one-third of our diet consists of fermented foods and beverages, including breads, sausages, cheeses, yoghurts, pickles, wines, spirits and beers. Many of these foods provide the regional variety and local interest in traditional foods in our increasingly global cuisines. Indeed Africa, along with the Middle East, Europe and Asia are rich sources of many of these fermented foods, which provide essential nutrients, and particularly the micronutrients which are essential for our health and wellbeing.

Often we think of microorganisms in negative terms, involved in food spoilage and poisoning. Although important, microorganisms are even more important in their positive, functional role in producing fermented foods and beverages. Lactic acid bacteria, yeasts and moulds are the key functional microorganisms in providing the safe, nutritious and preserved flavoursome fermented foods which we appreciate and enjoy.