SENSORY ACCEPTANCE OF OSMOTICALLY DEHYDRATED *BANANA DA TERRA* (*MUSA SAPIENTUM*) DURING STORAGE

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The osmotic pretreatment followed by convective drying is an alternative dehydration technology for *banana da terra* (*MUSA SAPIENTUM*). Its effects are associated mainly with the improvement of nutritional, sensory, and functional properties of food products when compared to direct dehydration. The process aimed to verify the effect of sucrose concentrations during osmotic pretreatment, as well as of convective drying temperatures, on the sensory acceptance of such product regarding the attributes flavor, texture, and appearance. The bananas were immersed into 40 or 60 °Brix sucrose solutions, following the ratio 1/5 (w/w) for 4 hours at 60°C, followed by convective drying at 60 or 70 °C until water activity 0.70 was reached. The 80 judges were placed in individual booths and evaluated the product right after its processing and after 120 days of storage. The data were analyzed by Internal Preference Map. The bananas remained stable and within the established microbiological standards. For flavor, texture and appearance, the 3 first components explained 75.19, 81.71, and 83.37% of the total variance between the treatments as to their acceptances. As for the studied attributes, it was noticed that the less accepted treatments (without pretreatment) kept displaying the lowest acceptances during storage. Distinct groups were formed, suggesting higher acceptance of osmotically pretreated bananas in comparison to other treatments. Therefore, the osmotic pretreatment positively contributed to the acceptance of *banana da terra*. Acknowledgements: FAPEMIG, CNPq, FINEP, CAPES.