Investigation of the nutritional value of smoothhound shark (*Mustelus mustelus*) meat

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*Mustelus mustelus* is a commercial shark species commonly caught off the Southern African coastline, which is consumed locally and exported globally. Nonetheless, very little information is currently available in the scientific literature pertaining to the chemical composition, nutritional value and safety of the meat. The aim of this study was to determine the overall chemical composition and nutritional value of *Mustelus mustelus* meat. One representative sample per shark was analysed to determine the average proximate composition (*n* = 62), amino acid, fatty acid and mineral composition (*n* = 30) as well as histamine and mercury contents (*n* = 30) of the meat. The sample group analysed included males, females and pregnant females of differing size categories. Results indicated that the meat of this species can be considered to be a lean meat (1.6 g·100 g⁻¹ (wet weight) lipids), albeit that it contains considerable quantities of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. A 100 g portion of fillet would provide a large proportion (≥50%) of the RDA/EDI of most essential amino acids. The mineral content of the meat was found to be low, but the total mercury content exceeded the maximum safe limit in some meat samples. Histamine was only detected in some meat samples. However, levels were far below the maximum safe limit. *Mustelus mustelus* meat can therefore generally be regarded as healthy in terms of human nutrition, except for the possible hazard of high mercury levels, which suggests that portion size and average weekly intake should be moderated.