

Food Safety Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Food Handlers in Makkah, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Food safety represents a significant concern for public health as pathogenic agents, whether microbial, chemical, and/or physical, pose risks to human health. This study assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of 131 food handlers at restaurants in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, that focused on their duty in preventing foodborne diseases. A cross-sectional study using a validated KAP questionnaire showed that 56.5% of respondents demonstrated adequate food safety knowledge, while 43.5% posed knowledge-related risks. Attitudes were generally positive, with only 19.8% displaying risk-related attitudes, yet a significant gap between attitudes and practices was observed. Alarming, 60.3% of participants reported practices that posed food safety risks. Sociodemographic analysis showed that education level significantly impacted KAP scores, with uneducated participants scoring the lowest. While 93% of participants had undergone food safety training, gaps persisted, suggesting the need for enhanced and frequent training with programs tailored to address specific deficiencies. The study sheds light on the need for more comprehensive interventions for food safety, including stricter regulatory oversight, continuous education, and behaviour monitoring, particularly during high-risk periods like the Hajj season. Future research should explore observational methods and intervention effectiveness to address these gaps and enhance food safety compliance in Makkah's food service industry.

Keyword: knowledge, attitudes, practices, foodborne diseases, Makkah's food service

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