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Food safety knowledge and hygiene practices among food handlers working in community and healthcare settings in Kuwait districts

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Food handlers (FH) play an important role in ensuring food hygiene during food production. Unsafe food handling could be potential sources of dissemination of bacterial infection. Our aim is to determine the level of food safety knowledge among food handlers in Kuwait. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using structured questionnaire, from September 2015 to June 2016. A total of 405 participants; 182 (44.9%) were community food handlers (CFH) and 223 (55.1%) were Healthcare food handlers (HCFH). Indian nationality formed the bulk of the HCFH (140: 62.8%) whilst the Philipinos formed the majority of the CFH (67: 35.8%). Analysis by age stratification showed that higher proportion (44%) the FH were aged 29-39 years. The majority (343: 84.7%) were male participants. Approximately 43% of them had a high school certification, particularly the HCFH (58.7%). About 63.7% of the CFH had college degrees. Assessment of fingernails trimming habit showed that 348 (85.9%) cut their nails once a week and 33 (8.1%) rarely did with hardly any difference between HCFH and CFH. Only 24 (5.9%) gave a history of previous hospitalization. About 65.4% knew of the necessity for changing utensils while handling unwrapped raw or cooked foods. However, an unacceptable proportion (44.9%) of the FHs wore the same gloves when handling meat and fresh food. Equally, high proportion (42.2%) of the FHs went home with their working clothes. Overall, a reasonable proportion of the FHs were knowledgeable about hygienic practices and sanitation procedures. However, some practices were below recommended standards and may pose a significant risk to the consumers.

Biography

Ola Moghnia is a PhD candidate of Medical Microbiology in Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University. She has received her BSc in Medical Laboratory Sciences, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences and MSc in Medical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University. She has worked in both Hematology and Microbiology Division (2001-2002) at Ibn Sina Specialized Hospital and also in Microbiology at Maternity Hospital, Ministry of Health in Kuwait.

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