

Male Food Handlers Knowledge on Hygienic Practices

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the knowledge regarding personal hygiene, environmental hygiene and food hygiene of male food handlers in selected restaurants at Ernakulam and to find the association between knowledge among male food handlers and selected variables such as age, experience and education. 98% of participants had average and 2% had below average knowledge score on personal hygiene. 37% of the participants had a score below average, 43% of the participant had an average and 20% of the participants had an above average score on environmental hygiene. All participants had average knowledge scores on food hygiene. Only the age of the participants is found to be associated with environmental hygiene.

Keywords: Personal Hygiene; Consumption; Food Poisoning.

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Introduction

Through centuries, food has been recognized as important for human beings in health and disease. The history of man to a large extent has been a struggle to obtain food. Man eats or drinks food to maintain life and growth. The food can be of animal and vegetable origin, and nutrients are organic and inorganic complexes contained in food. Food surveillance is essential for the protection and maintenance of community health. Broadly it implies the monitoring of food safety or food hygiene. The WHO has defined Food Safety and Food Hygiene as *"all conditions and measures that are necessary during the production, processing, storage, distribution, and preparation of food to ensure that it is safe, sound, wholesome, and fit for human consumption"*. The declaration by Alma Ata conference of 1978 considered food safety as an essential component of primary health care.

Food is the potential source of infection and is liable for contamination by microorganisms at any point during its journey from the producer to the consumer. Food hygiene in its widest sense implies hygiene in the production, handling, distribution, and serving of all types of food. The primary aim of food hygiene is to prevent food poisoning and other food borne diseases.

Now-a-days there is an increase in the number of restaurants especially small restaurants and fast food centers. Many of these restaurants are not following the standards suggested for restaurants and eating houses in India under the Model Public Health Act 174 (1955).

A large number of people depend on the hotel and restaurant industry for their livelihood. Many of these persons are from poor economic and socio cultural backgrounds. Their knowledge regarding food hygiene may be very poor. So it is important to teach or inform them about the practice of food hygiene. Most of us have consumed hotel food for several times in our life time. Most of us also have several experience of improper hygiene of food handlers. For example- long nails, dirty clothes, habits like nail biting etc. We are also reading from newspapers about incidence of food poisoning frequently.

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Problem Statement

Study to assess the knowledge regarding personal hygiene, environmental hygiene and food hygiene of male food handlers in selected restaurants at Ernakulam

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge scores among male food handlers regarding personal hygiene, environmental hygiene and food hygiene.
2. To determine the association between knowledge among male food handlers and selected variables such as:
 - Age
 - Experience
 - Education

Delimitations

- This study is limited to selected restaurants at Ernakulam.
- This study is limited to male food handlers.
- This study is limited to 50 male food handlers.

Research Approach and Design

The research was quantitative in its nature and the design was cross sectional descriptive design.

Research Setting

The setting is where the population or the portion of it that is being studied is located. The study will be conducted at a selected place at Ernakulam.

The reasons for selecting the setting were:

- Familiarity with the setting
- Availability of the subjects.
- Feasibility of conducting the study
- Easy access
- Economy of time
- Administrative approval and expectations of cooperation for the study from various personnel.

Population

The population of present study includes the male food handlers working in selected restaurants in at Ernakulam.

Sample

The sample of the present study comprises of 50 male food handlers working in selected restaurants at Ernakulam.

Sample size

The sample size was 50.

The Data Collection Tool

The tool comprises of the following:

Part -1

Consist of Questionnaire for baseline data. Items for obtaining information about baseline data that is age education and experience.

Part-2

It consists of three sections section 1, section 2 and section 3 with 8 questions on personal hygiene, 8 questions on food hygiene and 9 questions on environmental hygiene respectively (total 25 questions) and the responses can be either yes or no for all the questions. Correct answer gives one score and a wrong answer gives no or zero score.

Method of Data Collection

Investigators got permission from the restaurant owners for conducting the study as per the convenience of the samples. Samples were informed about the study and confidentiality of the data was assured to the samples.

Results

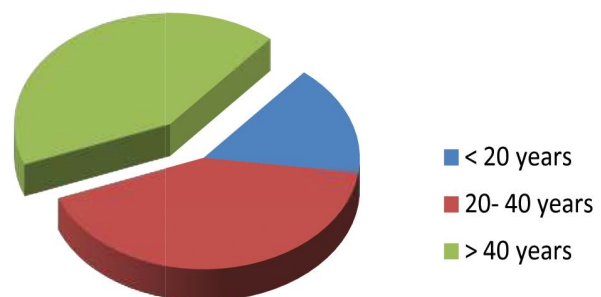


Fig. 1: Pie diagram showing the distribution of participants according to their age

Data presented in Fig. 1 shows that 42% belong to the age group of 20-40, 42% belong to the age group of more than 40 years whereas 16% were in the age group of less than 20 years.

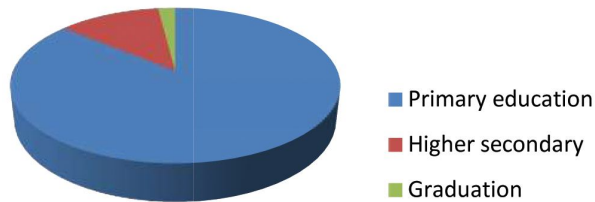


Fig. 2: Pie diagram showing the distribution of participants according to their education

Distribution of male food handlers according to their education status highlights that 86% have only primary level education 12% have higher secondary education and only 2% have degree level education.

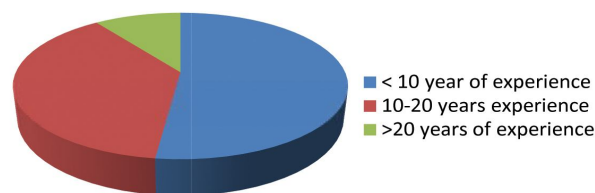


Fig. 3: Pie diagram showing the distribution of participants according to their experience

Data presented in the diagram shows that a majority of participants that is 52% had experience of <10 years. Among the sample subjects 38% had experience of 10-20 years whereas only 10% had experience of >20 years.

98% of participants had average and 2% had below average knowledge score on personal hygiene. 37% of the participants had a score below average, 43% of the participant had an average and 20% of the participants had an above average score on environmental hygiene. All participants had average knowledge scores on food hygiene.

On statistical analysis only the age of the participants is found to be associated with environmental hygiene. Environmental hygiene was not found associated with educational status and years of experience of the participants. Knowledge score on personal hygiene and food hygiene were not associated with age, education and experience.

Discussion

Community health workers can use this data for educating the food handlers regarding, personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, and food hygiene. This research is of very importance as there is a mushrooming of restaurants in India. Community health workers should also monitor the maintenance of hygiene by the food handlers.

This research gives baseline data on the knowledge of male food handlers regarding, personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, and food hygiene which can be used for further research. This research widens the scope of research in community health nursing. Further research in this area will develop more strategies for food hygiene in the community set up.

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