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Article

## KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE AMONG FOOD HANDLERS OF QAMC AND BVH BAHAWALPUR

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**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Food is an important basic necessity. It's procurement, preparation and consumption is vital for the sustenance of life. **Objectives:** The aim of this study is to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding food hygiene among the food handlers of canteens in BVH/QAMC. **Material and methods:** This descriptive study was conducted in July 2017 to December 2107. Data is collected through a preformed questionnaire. There were 2 parts of the questionnaire. First part comprises of questions relating to knowledge, attitude and practices of food handlers. Second part comprises of the information observed by the researchers, regarding the hygiene of the food handlers and their surroundings. **Results:** Mean age of 100 food handlers was 32 years. Majority were males (93%) and the maximum number of participants in the age group of 21-30 years (40.4%). Majority of the food handlers had poor knowledge regarding food borne diseases (64%). Most of the participants have the attitude of serving hot food (89%). All (100%) the food handlers wash hands before food preparation while (58%) use gloves for food preparation. Majority of the food handlers clean their workplace twice a day (57%). There is adequate protection of food from flies in most of the canteens (85%). Most of the food handlers had clean hands (69%) and finger nails (84%). **Conclusion:** Majority of the study participants have poor knowledge related to food borne diseases but positive attitude and practices towards food hygiene while food preparation.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Food, which is defined as: “An early article - manufactured, sold or represented for the use as an edible or drink for human consumption” OR “any item, that enters into or is used in composition, preparation or preservation of any food or drink”, is an important basic necessity. Its procurement, preparation and consumption is vital for the sustenance of life. Food handler is defined as: “A person in food trade or someone professionally associated with it, such as an inspector, who in his routine work comes into direct contact with food, in the course of production, processing, packaging or distribution.

Accordingly, food handlers with poor personal hygiene and lack of awareness of important issues in preventing food borne diseases, working in food establishment could be a potential source of many intestinal helminthes, protozoa and enterogenic pathogens.

The aim of study was to assess the current knowledge, attitude & practices regarding food hygiene among the workers of college and hospital canteens and to procure information about various foods handling practices and spread awareness about the prevention of food borne disease. The required data was obtained by pre-designed questionnaire.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS:**

This descriptive study was conducted in July 2017 to December 2107. Data is collected through a preformed questionnaire. Eight canteens in Bahawal Victoria Hospital and Quaid-e-Azam Medical College were included in the study. Fatima Jinnah Hall canteen, Johar Hall canteen, Ghazali Hall canteen, Faisal Hall canteen, Attique Hall canteen, Girls Hostel canteen, QAMC college canteen, Bahawal Victoria hospital canteen.

Target population was all the food handlers working in eight canteens of QAMC/BVH i.e Fatima Jinnah Hall canteen, Johar Hall canteen, Ghazali Hall canteen, Faisal Hall canteen, Attique Hall canteen, Girls Hostel canteen, QAMC college canteen, Bahawal Victoria hospital canteen.

All the workers of each canteen were included in the study. Nineteen (19) workers from Fatima Jinnah Hall canteen, 14 workers from Johar Hall canteen, 7 workers from Ghazali Hall canteen, 14 workers from Faisal Hall canteen, 6 workers from Attique Hall canteen, 25 workers from Girls Hostel canteen, 3 workers from QAMC college canteen, 12 workers

from Bahawal Victoria hospital canteen were included in the study on the basis of their accessibility and proximity to the researchers by convenience sampling technique.

**Data collection**

Data was collected by using preformed questionnaire comprising of two parts. First part contains data related to the demographic profile of the participants (age, gender, educational status, place of canteen) and second part consists of questions related to knowledge, attitude and practices of food handlers regarding food hygiene. Three questions were used to assess the knowledge regarding food hygiene which included whether the participant had ever heard about food borne diseases, the way food borne diseases are transmitted and can these be prevented. Two questions were asked about attitude related to food hygiene (whether the participant served hot food and if they consult a doctor when ill). Five questions were asked to assess the practices regarding food hygiene (whether the participant uses gloves for food preparation, wash hands before food preparation, refrigerate leftover food, check the expiry date on food items before preparation and the number of times they clean the place).

**Data analysis**

Data was analyzed through SPSS. Mean was calculated for age.

**RESULTS:**

In the study, we conducted, 100 food handlers working in canteens of Bahawal Victoria Hospital/Quaid-e-Azam Medical College (BVH/QAMC) were included. The mean age of the participants was 32 years. Out of 100 participants, 93(93%) were males and 7(7%) were females. 10.1% of the participants were in the age group of 11-20 years , 40.4%(40) were in the age group of 21-30 years, 21% (21) were in the age group of 31-40 years while 28% (28) of the participants were in the ages of >40 years. When participants were asked about their education, it was revealed that 15% had never been to school for education, 21% had received primary education, 18% had done matric while only 7% had education above matric. The participants were taken from 8 different canteens of BVH/QAMC: 14(14%) participants each from Johar hall and Faisal hall, 7(7%) from Ghazali hall, 19(19%) from Fatima Jinnah hall and 6(6%) from Attique hall. In addition, 25 (25%) participants were from girls' hostel canteen, 12(12%) from hospital canteen and 3(3%) from college canteen.

**Table No. 01: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS (N=100)**

<b>AGE of the Respondents</b>	Frequency
11-20	10
21-30	40
31-40	21
>40	28
Total	100
<b>GENDER of the Respondents</b>	Frequency
Male	93
Female	7
Total	100
<b>EDUCATION of the Respondents</b>	Frequency
Primary	21
under Matric	39
Matric	18
Above matric	7
Illiterate	15
Total	100
<b>PLACE the Canteen</b>	Frequency
Johr hall	14
Ghazali hall	7
Faisal hall	14
F.J hall	19
Girls hostel canteen	25
College canteen	3
Hospital canteen	12
Attique hall	6
Total	100

**Table No. 02: OBESERVED CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPANATS (N=100)**

<b>Adequate protection of food</b>	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	85	85.0	85.0
no	15	15.0	100.0
Total	100		
<b>Dishing out food?</b>	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bare handed	44	44.0	44.0
Gloved hands	6	6.0	50.0
Spoon/handle	50	50.0	100.0
Total	100		
<b>Presence of debris on food?</b>	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	31	31.0	31.0
no	69	69.0	100.0
Total	100		
<b>Finger nails cleanliness</b>	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Clean	84	84.0	84.0
Unclean	16	16.0	100.0
Total	100		

**DISCUSSION:**

This study was done in Quaid-e-Azam medical college and BV hospital Bahawalpur's canteen to assess the knowledge, attitude and the level of practice of food hygiene among food vendors working there. In this study, the respondents were mainly the males (93.0%) within the age group of 21-30 (40.0%) and minimum were found below 20 years of age (10.0%). Studies conducted at national and international level also affirms that maximum food handlers are in the young age group.<sup>1</sup>

The education level of the respondents was not good. Majority of the food handlers working in QAMC & BVH were under matric (39.0%). 15% were totally illiterate. A research conducted in Hyderabad showed the similar results where 31.3% food handlers were illiterate and overall education level was also found to be very low. Only a few were literate or above matric.

But irrespective of the education, most of the respondents had good practice and attitude. 100% of food handlers washed their hands before handling the food as was found during a study in south Africa 2007 where it was claimed that 94% of the food handlers washed their hands during food processing.

**CONCLUSION:**

Positive attitude & practice is reported by a great majority of food handlers, who agrees that wearing caps, protective gloves and adequate clothing reduce the risk of food contamination. They know that food handling relates to the food safety and if it is ignored i.e. Improper cleanliness or storage, it may be hazardous to the health. One factor which is observed in them is the poor knowledge & less awareness among the food handlers. It is because of the fact that most of them are uneducated.

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