

# ABSTRACT

## Introduction

Small-scale food manufacturing establishments have considerable contribution to economy of Sri Lanka. The opportunity to have food safety in small-scale food manufacturing establishments is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. Hence exploration of current knowledge, attitudes and practices on food hygiene and food-borne diseases is essential for future planning of health interventions. Small-scale food manufacturing establishments were defined as work settings with worker strength of 50 or less than 50, which were registered in Business Registers (having trade licenses) at the local authority (Municipal Council).

## Objectives

This study was carried out to describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices, of food hygiene and food-borne diseases among food handlers in small-scale food manufacturing establishments in Medical officer of Health area Dehiwala.

## Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among total population of food handlers in small-scale food manufacturing establishments from September 2014 to January 2015. Data was collected from 301 eligible and consented food handlers by using a pretested interviewer administered questionnaire and non-participatory observational check list. Data was analyzed by using SPSS 20.0 version.

## Results

The response rate was 94.06%. Mean age of the food handlers were 33.24years (SD=12.16) and the majority were in 20-29 years group. The majority of Food handles were males. Ninety six percent of food handlers had poor knowledge on food hygiene and food-borne diseases and none of them had good knowledge on these. The level of education ( $p= 0.005$ ) and awareness received on food hygiene and food-borne diseases during the previous year ( $p=0.03$ ) showed statistically significant

associations with the knowledge on food hygiene and food-borne diseases among food handlers. Favorable attitude towards usage of personal protective equipment and utensils of the food handlers was 71.91% and majority of them (99.35%) had a favorable attitude towards practicing personal hygienic measures

Years of experience in current food manufacturing establishment had a statistically significant association with level of practices of personal hygiene and food sanitation among food handlers ( $P=0.002$ ).

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The majority of the food handlers in small-scale food establishments had poor knowledge on food hygiene and food-borne diseases. Almost all the food handlers had favorable attitudes towards practicing personal hygienic measures. Food handlers working in around 78% of small-scale food manufacturing establishments had poor practices on food hygiene and food-borne diseases.

### **Key words**

Food handler, Food hygiene, Food-borne diseases, Small-scale, Food manufacturing establishment.