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Study on the effectiveness of selected aspects of Food (Hygiene) Regulations, 2011 of Sri Lanka: A case study from Horana MOH Division

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Abstract

The degree to which food handlers adhere to hygienic practices has a substantial impact on the effectiveness of food hygiene regulations. The objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the Food Hygiene Regulation 2011 of Sri Lanka and the factors affecting the hygienic practices among the food handlers in Horana Medical Officers of Health (MOH) Division. This study employed a structured questionnaire survey to assess the knowledge and attitude of food handlers, and an observational checklist to assess practices of selected aspects of Food hygiene regulation 2011. The descriptive analysis was used to interpret the knowledge, attitude, and practice-related information. Furthermore, an independent sample t-test and ANOVA test were performed to compare the knowledge, attitude, and practice related attributed to different socio-demographic variables. According to the results of protective clothes-related practices, 5.19% wear an apron without pockets, 5.19% wear hand gloves, 39.26% of wear a facemask, 2.96% wear suitable footwear, and 4.07% wear hair nets while handling food and beverages. While dealing with food, 44.81% of food handlers were not handling money and food simultaneously, and 39.26% of handlers were not talking without a mask. Regarding the food handler's knowledge of food regulations, it was obvious that the correct answers provided by the respondents were in the range of 56.87 to 98.51%. The mean values for food handlers' attitudes towards food regulations were 2.19 to 4.49. The findings of ANOVA revealed that the attitude and practices of the respondents had no significant difference with respect to gender. But only the knowledge related to personal hygiene attributes had a significant difference with respect to gender. Personal hygiene and medical certificate-related attributes were significantly different between the different ranges of age groups. Furthermore, there were no significant differences observed in the food handlers' knowledge compared to the education levels except for storage-related knowledge. However, there was a significant difference observed in the practice of food handlers with respect to the different education levels. Conclusively, even if food handlers have good knowledge of Food hygiene regulations, they do not practice accurate procedures properly depending on the socio- demographic variables.

Keywords: Attitude, Food handlers, Food hygienic regulation, Knowledge, Practices

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