



THE LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE OF FOOD HANDLERS WITH NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON
FOOD HYGIENE AND SAFETY PRACTICES: A CASE OF SELECTED FAST FOOD
OUTLETS IN THOHOYANDOU, SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Food borne diseases (FBDs) comprise a large group of illnesses that are caused by the ingestion of contaminated food. Global statistics estimate that each year, unsafe food makes at least two billion people ill worldwide. This represents about one third of the global population. The greatest concern is that failure to comply with food safety and hygiene requirement by food handlers has contributed to the outbreak of food borne diseases despite an array of legislation meant to protect public health.

The purpose of the study is to assess the level of compliance of food handlers in Thohoyandou with national regulations on food hygiene and safety practices. The study was a cross sectional observational study. All the 60 fast food outlets were selected and simple random sampling was used to select 122 food handlers who participated in the study and data was gathered using a structured observation checklist and personal interviews. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data.

RESULTS: The results of the study revealed that on personal hygiene 115(94%) had their finger nails cut, 87(71%) washed hands with soap. Furthermore 118(98%) were observed wearing clean uniforms while 122(100%) make use of aprons or hair nets to cover head. One hundred and twenty (98%) were observed washing raw vegetables before cooking whilst 110(90%) washed utensils before cooking or serving. Food handlers also engaged in unhygienic practices. Only 2(1.6%) of the respondents were observed shaking hands whilst preparing food, whilst 1(0.8%) were found chewing whilst preparing food. Five (4%) of the respondents were observed collecting money at the same time serving or dishing food. Concerning health surveillance practices of the respondents, 44(36%) food handlers undergo regular medical check-up, 108(89%) reported illness to management when sick and 26(21.3%) prepared food when they had cough. Furthermore 30 (24.5%) were observed with open sores on their hands.

In terms of provision and adequacy of basic hygiene infrastructure of the fast food premises 55(92%) of fast food outlets are built in such a manner that the design and layout ensure good

or proper hygiene, 57 (95%) of the premises are designed in a way which allows adequate cleaning, whilst 55 (92%) protect against the accumulation of dirt. Concerning provision of water, 60(100%) of the facilities have potable running water whilst 59(98.3%) allows for enough ventilation. Fifty five (92%) of the facilities walls are free from dust, soot and spider web. Furthermore 49 (82%) of the facilities are designed to prevent contamination of food, whilst 51 (85%) floor are free from cracks. Forty (66%) of premises do not have hot and cold water whilst 60 (100%) had hand washing basins had soap and drying facilities. The observed environment around food premises showed that 55 (92%) were clean and located a distance far from contaminating material such as waste water, toilet facilities, open drains and animals. Concerning the provision of soap, tissues and nail brushes in toilets. Fifty seven (95%) of toilets observed had soap and 60(100%) had tissues rolls.

Conclusion: Generally compliance levels to regulations are fair in fast food outlets in Thohoyandou.

KEY WORDS: Compliance, fast food outlets, Food Safety and Hygiene, Food handler