

**PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE OF FOOD
SAFETY IN PREPACKAGED FOOD PRODUCTS
PRODUCING SMALL AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES IN NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
YANGON**

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ABSTRACT

The burden of food borne illness is becoming greater around the world. Food borne illness includes a wide variety of diseases and is a growing public health concern resulting high morbidity and mortality worldwide. Institutional food handlers serve as vehicle for cross-contamination of food or source of infection as they come in contact with food products while preparing food for consumers. As a developing country, numbers of food producing small and medium enterprises are increasing rapidly and food safety knowledge of food handlers is important to prevent food borne disease outbreaks. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 188 food handlers from 38 different food producing small and medium enterprises in northern district of Yangon, from September to December 2019 to assess the perception and practice of food safety using face-to-face interviews with pretested questionnaires and observational checklists. The majority of the participants (92%) had low level of knowledge score on food safety. Most of them could answer correctly to questions relating personal hygiene but the majorities were not knowledgeable about proper food storage and safe food handling. Their main source of information on food safety was from hearsays (45.2%) and mass media (44.1%). Overall attitude of food handlers in this study was satisfactory. The majority of them (80%) recognize the importance of safe food handling to ensure food safety. The study indicated that there were statistically significant associations between education and knowledge on food safety ($P=0.008$), working experience and knowledge ($P=0.002$), food safety training and knowledge of food safety ($P=0.007$). And also there were statistically associations between gender and attitude on food safety ($P=0.013$), working experience and attitude ($P=0.013$), job position and attitude ($P=0.025$), food safety training and attitude ($P=0.009$). Programs aiming to increase food safety knowledge of institutional food handlers should be carried out by the responsible organizations.