

The microbiological quality of street foods compared to home-prepared and hotel restaurant foods in Hanoi-Vietnam

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Abstrak

ABSTRACT

A study on microbiological quality of street foods in comparison with home-prepared and hotel-restaurant foods was carried out at Hai Ba Trung and Hoan Klein districts in Hanoi, Vietnam from December 1994 to March 1995. Ninety samples of the most common meals were collected, and 35 food handlers were interviewed. The microbiological analyses were carried out according to methods of enumeration of mesophilic aerobic bacteria and enumeration of coliform bacteria at the Microbiological Laboratory of the National Institute of Nutrition (NINVietnam).

Greatest numbers of microbial counts were found in the samples obtained from street source. In Bun cha and Bun nem obtained from street vendors, E.coli was present in 60% of the samples, aerobic plate counts (APCs) were up to 10^7 and coliform counts ranged from 10 to 10^5 per gram of food. On the other hand, "mixed rice" dishes which are served hot had a low bacterial contamination. Microbiological quality of hotel-restaurant foods was superior to the street foods. Comparison between street foods and home-prepared foods demonstrated significant differences in APCs of "mixed rice" dish (which consists of cooked rice, fried egg and vegetable soup with $P = 0.020$) and Bun cha ($P = 0.046$). Further analyses on the comparison between "mixed rice" dishes from the same source did not show significant differences in microbial counts. Likewise, there were no significant differences between home prepared and hotel foods. However, there was a tendency that hotel-restaurant dishes had lower microbial counts.

This study has suggested that the importance of using potable water and proper food handling practices were viewed as essential. Given that street foods are consumed by the main-stream working people in Hanoi, there are urgent needs to improve the microbiological quality of street foods. Actions should be taken to introduce the knowledge on food hygiene priority to street vendors and their customers. More research is necessary to identify the causes of the problem using HACCP (Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Points).