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The relative proportion of foodborne disease associated with food preparation or handling practices in the home


The home is recognised as a point in the food chain where risks of consumers contracting foodborne disease can be minimised through the application of good hygiene practices. This study aimed to estimate the proportion of UK foodborne disease attributable to foods prepared in the home in order to focus further research, interventions and food safety messages. A systematic review of academic and grey literature (from 1990, English language and from countries with similar dietary practices to England and Wales) was undertaken using search terms and inclusion criteria agreed in an 'expert workshop'. Of the 278 academic articles evaluated, 71 were included, supplemented with 21 items from the grey literature. Results show a complicated picture for attribution of incidence to setting, although most studies suggest the highest proportion of foodborne illness to derive from commercial food service settings. The review also investigated domestic hygiene and food preparation practices to identify risk factors linked to illness. Only case reports (which are rare) directly link to episodes of illness; in such cases, behaviours maybe implicated. Case control studies, whilst linked to illness, do not confirm the actual cause, only risk factors. Microbiological investigations of kitchen sites identified

widespread contamination by pathogens. Observation studies highlighted many contraventions in hygiene practice, largely inadequate hand washing, inadequate sanitation of boards/knives and poor temperature control. Using findings from the systematic review, the potential links between food activities to the point of consumption have been summarised in a series of generic and pathogen specific theoretical framework diagrams.

Speaker Biography

Anita Eves has taught and researched at the University of Surrey for 25 years and has published extensively. Her research interests lie in consumer behaviour, both in relation to food choice (where the focus has often been around healthy choices) and also the behaviours of those handling food (in both domestic and foodservice settings). She is a founding member of the University's Food, Consumer Behaviour and Health Research Group (a multidisciplinary group comprising representatives from the health and social sciences). Her work in the area of food safety has included investigations of food safety training (and its effectiveness) amongst food handlers in the food service sector, food hygiene training more generally in the food sector, teaching of food safety practices in schools and systematic reviews of the literature to establish incidence and causes of food poisoning (related to food poisoning arising in the home and *Listeria monocytogenes* in foodservice settings). Much of her work has been funded by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), and as such has contributed to policy and the FSA research agenda.

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