
Abstract

Consumers' Food Safety Knowledge and Practices During COVID-19 in Jordan: Web-based Survey

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Abstract

Background: In Western countries, several studies have reported changes in consumers' behaviors regarding food safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The shared responsibility of food safety, between governments, food businesses, and consumers, has been well recognized and calls for extra preventive measures and recommendations to be introduced for food handlers, producers, and consumers. Little, however, is known about food safety in developing countries, including Jordan.

Objective: This study assessed the food safety knowledge and behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Jordan.

Methods: A web-based, self-administered questionnaire, published via the Jordan Food and Drug Administration website and social media platforms (March-July 2021), was utilized. The questionnaire assessed COVID-19 preventive measures (11 questions), food safety knowledge, (13 questions), and food safety practices (12 questions). Descriptive statistics were presented.

Results: In total, 969 respondents gave valid responses, of which 588 (60.7%) were females, 325 (33.5%) were 38-49 years old, 628 (64.8%) were married, 623 (64.3%) had college or bachelor degrees, 376 (38.8%) were from the central region, 809 (83.5%) were living in urban settings, and 313 (32.3%) had a medical background. The mean (SD) food safety knowledge score was 8.34 (2.33; range 0-13). Mean food safety knowledge scores were significantly different ($P<.05$) by age, marital status, education, field of study, training in food safety, employment status, monthly family income, and area of residence but not by gender and number of family members. Statistically significant correlations between mean knowledge scores and COVID-19 practice scores ($P<.001$, $r=0.183$) and food safety practice scores ($P<.001$, $r=0.346$) were detected.

Conclusions: Consumers seem to have adequate food safety knowledge and follow COVID-19-related preventive measures, which may transfer to better food practices and prevention of diseases, such as foodborne illnesses and COVID-19. Further studies and interventions in this regard are needed in Jordan.

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KEYWORDS

food safety; COVID-19; knowledge; practices

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