

Food Safety Practice and Associated Factors among Food Handlers in the Public Food Establishments in Batu Town, Central Oromia, Ethiopia, 2021 [†]

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[†] Presented at the 2nd International Electronic Conference on Foods, 15–30 October 2021; Available online: <https://foods2021.sciforum.net/>.

Abstract: Background: Food safety is a scientific discipline describing the handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent foodborne illnesses. It is an utmost health concern and a significant challenge in both low-income and industrialized countries. The main objective of the study was to assess the prevalence of food safety practices and associated factors among food handlers in public food establishments in the Batu Town of Central Oromia. There were also no available data and sufficient study documents to justify food safety practices among communities in the Batu Town of Central Oromia, Ethiopia. **Methods:** Community-based cross-sectional study design was conducted on 302 food handlers working in the 151 public food establishments in Batu Town. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample. Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used after pretested on 5% of the total sample. Data normality was checked using histogram, Q-Q plot, Shapiro Wilk Test, and Goodness of fit using Hosmer and Lemeshow Test. Data were entered into Epi info version 7.0 and exported to SPSS version 21 software for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of study participants. A bivariable logistic regression analysis was done to detect out confounder. All variables with a p -value < 0.25 during bivariable analysis were entered into multiple logistic regression models to control any confounders. Odds ratio along with 95%CI were estimated to measure the strength of the association between predictive and outcome variables. Summary statistics significant was declared at p -value < 0.05 . **Results:** proportion of food safety practice was 176 (58%) of which 52% had good knowledge and 126 (47%) of the study participants had poor food safety practice. Those who had training on food safety practice were 3.1 more likely to keep food hygiene than those who didn't get training with (AOR 3.10, 95%CI (1.30, 7.38)), Those who had good knowledge on food safety practice were 3.90 times higher than odds of food safety practice as compared to those who had poor knowledge on food safety practice (AOR = 3.897, 95%CI (2.28, 6.70)). Those who had training on food safety practice were 3.1 more likely to keep food hygiene than those who didn't train on food safety practice with AOR 3.10, 95%CI (1.30, 7.38), p -value 0.01. Regarding food handlers, those who had good knowledge of food safety had 3.90 times higher odds of food safety practice as compared to those who had poor knowledge of food safety practice [AOR = 3.897, 95%CI (2.28, 6.70)]. **Conclusion:** The study indicated that food safety practice was low. The better-expected endpoints and prospective application of results observed will be used as a baseline for further study, for communities food safety practice intervention, for education and planning purposes of the administrative municipality, for policy-makers, NGOs, and Nutritionists, and health professions.

Keywords: food safety practice; factors; public food establishments; Batu town; Ethiopia

Citation: Abe, S.; Arero, G. Food Safety Practice and Associated Factors among Food Handlers in the Public Food Establishments in Batu Town, Central Oromia, Ethiopia, 2021. *Proceedings* **2021**, *68*, x. <https://doi.org/10.3390/xxxxx>

Published: 15 October 2021

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Informed Consent Statement:

Data Availability Statement: