

An Assessment of Food Hygiene Practices and Associated Health Risks Among Students and Food Vendors on the Campus of Father Adasu University, Makurdi, Benue State

Ode Olivia Ene*, Kingsley Chinedu Okafor

Department of Community Medicine and Primary Health Care

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Background: Food hygiene is a critical determinant in public health, particularly in institutional settings where large populations rely on informal food vendors. In Nigeria, university campuses face heightened risk of food borne illness due to poor regulatory oversight. Limited infrastructure and low awareness among food handlers and consumers. This study assessed food hygiene practices and associated health risks among students and food vendors at Father Adasu University, Benue State, Nigeria.

Methods: A Descriptive cross-sectional study design was used with a total of 302 students and 37 vendors surveyed using questionnaires and focus group discussions. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, and graphs, while Chi-square and logistic regression were applied to test hypotheses at a 0.05 confidence level.

Results: Awareness of food hygiene was high among students (99.3%) and vendors (89.2%), but actual practices were inconsistent. Only 43.2% of vendors reported regular use of gloves, 54.1% ensured proper utensil sanitation, and 48.6% stored food under safe conditions. Among students, 15.2% reported food-related illness, while 30.8% were uncertain of the source. Chi-square analysis showed no statistically significant association between vendor hygiene practices and students' food-related illness ($\chi^2 = 2.41$, $p > 0.05$). Logistic regression indicated that handwashing before food handling ($p = 0.031$), access to clean water ($p = 0.024$), and utensil hygiene ($p = 0.017$) significantly predicted reduced illness risk. Key barriers included lack of facilities (70.3%), weak enforcement, and financial constraints.

Conclusion: Stricter monitoring, improved hygiene infrastructure, and continuous vendor training are essential to safeguard student health and strengthen food safety culture on campus.

Keywords: Food Hygiene, Food Vendors, Campus Health, Food Safety, Public Health

