

**Original Article** 

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# Knowledge, attitude and practice of people about foodborne outbreak in Isfahan city, Iran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received 20 Aug 2014 Received in revised form 30 Dec 2014 Accepted 30 Jan 2015	This study was conducted after water scarcity and droughts in recent years in Isfahan Province, Iran. The aim of the study was to compare peoples knowledge, attitude, practice and other risk factors toward foodborne poisoning. A knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) survey study was conducted from January to December 2013 enrolling 580 subjects who were referred to health centers for health care, anonymously (response rate: 100%). The questionnaire included the following four parts: (a) general characteristics such a gender, education level, (b) 16 questions on knowledge (min=0, max=32); (c) 10 questions on attitude (min=0,
<i>Keywords:</i> KAP Study Foodborne disease Outbreak Iran	max=20); and (d) nine questions on practice (min=0, max=36). The overall mean score of knowledge, attitude and practice was 26.48 (SD=3.66), 14.23 (SD=2.47), and 28.01 (SD=3.80), respectively. KAP of food -borne outbreaks was significantly higher in people who worked in health system (p<0.001, p<0.001, p<0.001 respectively). KAP of food -borne outbreaks was significantly higher among people who had university education (p<0.001, p<0.001, p=0.006 respectively). According to adjusted linear regression analysis, practice of food and water-borne disease increased 0.16% per one unit increase in the score of knowledge (p<0.001) and 0.55% per one unit increase in the score of attitude (p<0.001). Such studies can be performed to identify groups at risk and might need more training about health care.

# 1. Introduction

Foodborne diseases are a growing public health problem worldwide. The main cause is food contaminated with microorganisms such as parasites, bacteria, viruses and other pathogens (1). The most virulent pathogens causing food -borne diseases are Campylobacter, Escherichia coli, salmonella and shigella (2). Foodborne disease outbreak occurs when two or more people have the same disease from the common contaminated food or drink source (3). The prevalent symptoms include an upset stomach, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and dehydration (4). According to WHO, "millions of people become ill and thousands die from preventable foodborne disease annually"(5). About 48 million Americans become sick due to contaminated food and water each year (3). WHO suggests several preventive keys for safe food including,

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keeping the food clean, separating raw and cooked foods, keeping food at safe temperatures, using safe water and raw materials (5). Most studies have indicated that the knowledge about food and water-borne outbreaks is low especially in young age groups (7-10). The knowledge, attitudes, and practice (KAP) studies are one of the best ways of assessing knowledge, attitude and practice of individuals (11). The current study was conducted after Water shortage and droughts in recent years in Isfahan. Therefore, with determining the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of people in Isfahan, if the level is low, we intervene in the education of the people and change their attitudes that lead to a better practice.

#### 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1. Study design

This was a cross-sectional survey conducted from January to December 2013 in Isfahan city, located in the center of Iran. All participants were enrolled voluntarily and anonymously in the study.

#### 2.2. Study area

The study was conducted in Isfahan city in Isfahan Province. Isfahan city, with an area of 482 km2 and a population of 1,829,932 people according to the Census of Population and Housing, is located in the Dasht-e-Kavir desert.

#### 2.3 Sampling and sample size

Using a two-stage stratified cluster sampling 580 participants aged over 18 years recruited from various health centers, clients in Isfahan city from January to December 2013. The response rate was 100%.

# 2.4. Data gathering

The questionnaire consisted of four sections as follows: (a) 18 questions on general characteristics such as gender, academic rank and education level, history of food poisoning, etc... (b) 16 questions related to knowledge of foodborne diseases including three-choice questions (Yes/No/Do not know) with a total score between zero and 36; (c) 10 three-choice questions; (Agree/Not agree/No idea) related to attitude toward foodborne diseases , with a total score between zero to 20 and (d) 9 fivechoice questions; (Always/Often/Sometimes/ Never/No Response) related to practice on foodborne diseases, with a total score between zero to 36.

We considered high knowledge, positive attitude and good practice if participant answered >%85 of the questions correctly, moderate knowledge, attitude and practice if they answered 70-85% of the questions correctly and low knowledge, negative attitude and weak practice if they answered <70% of the questions correctly.

The reliability of the questionnaire was investigated by conducting a pilot study on 50 people (in 10 selected centers and in each center five patients were interviewed twice within two weeks). The values of Cronbach's alpha and Spearman correlation coefficients for knowledge and attitude were 0.60.

# 2.5. Statistical analysis

Analysis of variance was used to compare the mean score of knowledge, attitude and practice across subgroups. An adjusted linear regression model was employed to estimate the effect of knowledge, attitude and other related factors on practice against foodborne outbreaks. All analysis were performed at the 5% significance level (p<0.05) using Stata 11 (Stata Corp, College Station, TX, USA).

#### 3. Results

From 580 volunteers enrolled into the study, 73.45 % (426) were female and 26.55% (154) male. The mean ( $\pm$ SD) age of the participants was 35.15 $\pm$ 0.48 years. The total mean ( $\pm$ SD) score of the participants' knowledge, attitude and practice of foodborne disease were 26.48  $\pm$ 3.66, 14.23  $\pm$ 2.47, and 28.01 $\pm$ 3.80, respectively. About 48% of the participants had high knowledge and 25.51% had good practice against foodborne outbreaks and 9% had positive attitude for preparing healthy foods (Appendixes 1-3).

3.1. Mean difference of KAP by demographic and prognostic factors

The mean of knowledge, attitude and practice in men and women were almost identical and there was no statistically significant difference (Table 1). The mean of knowledge and attitudes, in single and married were identical and there was no statistically significant difference ,also married participants had higher mean score of practice in comparison with singles, but it was not statistically significant (p=0.26). The mean scores of the knowledge, attitude and practice

		No.	Knowledge			Attitude			Practice		
Variables			Mean	SD	P value	Mean	SD	P value	Mean	SD	P value
Sex	Male	154	26.46	3.70	0.58	14.10	2.49	0.22	28.15	4	0.70
	Female	426	26.53	3.65	0.58	14.28	2.47	0.22	27.96	3.73	0.70
Marital	Married	511	26.39	3.56	0.96	14.21	2.43	0.71	28.05	3.76	0.26
Status	Single	69	27.19	4.29		14.39	2.81		27.74	4.13	
1.00	15.04										
Age	15-24	81	25.80	3.63		13.78	2.27		26.65	4.31	
Group	25.34										
	Vears	233	26.41	3.66		14.17	2.39		27.98	3.63	
	35-44				0.31			0.03			0.006
	vears	152	26.76	3.67		14.73	2.44		28.54	3.45	
	45-54	-									
	years	78	26.91	3.86		14.15	2.51		28.44	3.58	
	55-74	26	26.42	2.24		10.75	2.12		20.00	4.90	
	years	30	26.42	3.24		13.75	3.13		28.08	4.89	
Educatio	Illiterate	36	24.30	3.94		13.50	2.52		25.86	5.62	
n	High	106	25.23	4 29		13 76	2 47		28 11	3.86	
	school	100	20.20	1.2	< 0.001	10.70	2.17	< 0.001	20.11	0.00	0.006
	Diploma	225	26.23	3.31		14.10	2.41		28.08	3.58	
<b>T</b> 1	Academic	213	27.74	3.18		14.74	2.45		28.24	3.55	
Job	Health	53	29.49	2.64		16.15	2.14		29.77	3.19	
	employee										
	Regular	59	27.69	3.24		14.36	2.62		27.59	3.79	
	Worker	37	23 78	4.47		13 31	2 56		26 71	4 75	
	Housekee	52	23.76	4.47	< 0.001	15.51	2.50	< 0.001	20.71	4.75	< 0.001
	per	299	25.79	3.49		13.93	2.38		27.68	3.77	
	Teacher	26	26.81	3.71		14.81	2.40		27.96	3.79	
	Free job	81	26.81	3.47		14.14	2.44		29	3.61	
	Other	30	27.37	3.03		14.37	2.19		27.70	3.42	
Geograph	North	116	26.98	2.89		14.23	2.57		28.78	3.61	
ic area	South	116	25.95	4.46		14.43	2.56		27.31	4.36	
	East	116	26.14	3.45	0.04	14.27	2.46	0.7	28.15	3.70	0.5
	West	116	27.10	3.49		14	2.34		27.84	3.83	
	Center	116	26.24	3.76		14.24	2.45		27.96	3.62	
food	Yes	223	26.02	3.78		13.99	2.61		27.46	4	
poisoning					0.008			0.03			0.003
	No	357	26.77	3.57		14.39	2.37		28.35	3.64	

**Table 1.** Compares the differences in knowledge - attitude and practice of participants in terms of demographic variables using t-test and ANOVA

increased with increase of age, attitude and practice which were significant statistically (p=0.03, p=0.006, respectively), but knowledge was not significant. The mean scores of knowledge, attitude and practice increased by level of education which was statistically significant (p>0.001, p>0.001 and p= 0.006, respectively). Health workers had a better knowledge, attitudes and practice than other jobs and that it was statistically significant (p<0.0001, p<0.0001 and p=0.0005, but respectively), workers had little knowledge, attitude and practice. The study showed that in the Southern region of the city knowledge and the practice were worse than in other parts, but the difference was not significant.

The mean scores of knowledge, attitude and practice of people who had food poisoning during their lives were worse than those who did not have food poisoning, and it was statistically significant (p=0.008 and p=0.03 and p=0.03, respectively).

3.2. Adjusted multiple regression analysis results

The adjusted multiple regression analysis showed the jobs and education factors together have a significant impact on the knowledge (p<0.001 and F= 11.24).

Accordingly, all jobs were less informed than the health workers, tenured employees: with 1.59, workers: 4.59, housewives: 2.97, teachers: 2.49, self-employed: 2.5 and other jobs: 1.99, had less knowledge than health workers, all of which were statistically significant. People with secondary education had 0.9 score more knowledge than the illiterates and with preliminary education individuals, which was not statistically significant, However, high school and college graduates' knowledge were respectively 1.61 and 2.29 score more than the illiterates and people with preliminary education, all were statistically significant

The adjusted multiple regression analysis showed that occupation and education

Table 2. Adjusted multiple regression analysis assessing the effect of related factors on foodborne outbreak

	K	nowledge			Attitude			Practice	
Variables	Coefficient	Standard	Р-	Coefficient	Standard	P-	Coefficient	Standard	P-
		error	Value		error	Value		error	Value
Job									
Health employee(Reference)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tenured employee	-1.75	0.46	< 0.001	-1.75	0.46	< 0.001	-2.27	0.71	0.001
Worker	-2.55	0.58	< 0.001	-2.55	0.58	< 0.001	-2.71	0.89	0.003
Housekeeper	-2.04	0.39	< 0.001	-2.04	0.39	< 0.001	-1.87	0.61	0.002
Teacher	-1.29	0.57	0.02	-1.29	0.57	0.02	-2.17	0.90	0.02
Free job	-1.86	0.44	< 0.001	-1.86	0.44	< 0.001	-0.61	0.69	0.37
other	-1.75	0.55	0.001	-1.75	0.55	0.001	-0.94	0.89	0.29
Education									
Illiterate (Reference)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High school	0.26	0.46	0.58	0.26	0.46	0.58	2.43	0.72	0.001
Diploma	0.48	0.43	0.27	0.48	0.43	0.27	2.43	0.69	< 0.001
Academic	0.62	0.46	0.17	0.62	0.46	0.17	2.36	0.74	0.002
Age Group									
15-24 years(Reference)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-34 years							1.49	0.51	0.003
35-44 years							2.12	0.54	< 0.001
45-54 years							2.13	0.63	0.001
55-74 years							2.33	0.79	0.003
Constant	15.55	0.55	< 0.001	15.55	0.55	< 0.001	25.75	0.99	< 0.001
	F=11.2	24 P<0.00	01	F=11.2	24 P < 0.0	01	F=4.1	9 P<0.00	1

together had a significant effect on attitude (p<0.001 and F= 11.24). All jobs had lower attitude than the health workers. Tenured employees, with 1.75 score, workers 2.55, housewives 2.04, teachers 1.29, self-employed 1.86 and other jobs 1.75, had lower attitudes compared with health workers; all were statistically significant.

People with secondary education with 0.26 score, high school graduates 0.48 and college education 0.62 score had higher attitude than the illiterates and people with preliminary education, but they were not statistically significant.

The adjusted multiple regression analysis showed that the factors of occupation and education and age groups together had a significant impact on practice (p<0.001 and F=4.19). According to adjusted multiple regression analysis, Tenured employees with 2.27 score, workers 2.71, housewives 1.87, teachers 2.17, self-employed 0.61 and other jobs 0.94, had less practice towards health workers that all of them except self-employed and other jobs, were statistically significant. People with secondary with education 2.43, high school graduates 2.43 and college education 2.36 had more practice than the illiterates and people with preliminary education that all of them were statistically significant. All age groups had better practice than age group 15-24 age group. The age group of 25-34: with 1.49 score, the age group of 35-44: 2.12, the age group of 45-54: 2.13 and the age group of 55-74: 2.33 had more practice than the age group of 15-24, and all of them were statistically significant (Table 2).

#### 3.3. Adjusted linear regression analysis

According to adjusted linear regression analysis (Table 3), practice against foodborne disease increased 0.16% per one unit increase in the score of knowledge (p<0.001) and 0.55% per one unit increase in the score of attitude (p<0.001).

## 4. Discussion

The total means scores of knowledge, attitude and practice of foodborne diseases in men and women were alike. The knowledge of single people was better than married ones. The result of analysis of variance showed that with the increase of age, the mean score of KAP increases and with the increase in the level of education, the mean score of KAP increases, and in the health workers the mean score of KAP is better than other jobs, but in the workers, the mean score of KAP was less

Table 3. Adjusted linear regression analysis assessing the effect of knowledge and attitude on practice

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	p value	
Knowledge (per one-unit score)	0.16	0.04	< 0.001	
Attitude (per one-unit score)	0.55	0.06	< 0.001	
Constant	15.88	1.16	-	

than other occupations. This could be due to their low literacy and hard work and lack of training. For different areas of the city, the Southern people had poor knowledge and practice than other areas .In people who had been diagnosed with food poisoning during life, the mean score of KAP was lower than those who were not diagnosed with food This finding indicates poisoning. that individuals who have poorer knowledge, attitude and practice are more prone to foodborne diseases. Therefore, these types of studies can identify groups at risk and might need more training about health care. The knowledge and attitudes conducive to the practice of the linear regression results showed 0.16 units increases the practice score by increasing a knowledge score and 0.55 unit increases the practice score by increasing an attitude score.

In one study (22) no significant difference between age groups and knowledge was reported, that is similar to ours'. Another study (16) showed that the practice ratio of foodborne illness is average we also found same result (52%).

In another study (7) report 68 % of people always washed their hands with water and soap, 83% of the women and 87 % of the men had high knowledge about foodborne diseases, but this difference was not significant (p=0.51). The knowledge and education level had a direct relationship so that people with university education had the highest level of knowledge on diarrheal disease. This difference was statistically significant .In our study about 90 % of people washed their hands with water and soap, 44 % of the women and 46 % of the men had high knowledge but this difference was not statistically significant. The knowledge and education in our study also had a direct relationship. Another study (12) reported that 57.9%, 48% and 89.6% had moderate scores of knowledge, positive scores of attitude and positive practice, respectively. There was a direct relationship among knowledge, occupation and education level (p < 0.001). In our study, 41%, 9% and 26% had moderate score of knowledge, positive score of attitude and positive score of practice. There was a direct relationship among knowledge, occupation and education level in our study (p < 0.001). Another study (17) showed that 49% of respondents in Pablulybreh and 46% in Napuryor always wash their hands by soap

after going to the bathroom, but in our study this rate was 90%.

About 61% of the participants in a study (18) and 77% of the participants in our study believed in use of cooking clothes and gloves to reduce contamination of food. Besides 78% of the participants believed to separating raw foods from cooked foods (in our study it was 62%) and 61% of the respondents always defrosted frozen food at room temperature (in our study it was 23%). About 99% of the participants in a study (13) and 62% of the participants in our study believed to keep cooked foods separate from raw foods, 53% of the participants in this study and 77% of the participants in our study believed to use frozen foods only once after heating. Another study (19) showed that 90.7 % of the participants knew that germs grow at room temperature more than the refrigerator (in our study it was 71.38%). About 77% of respondents when they went to shopping always checked expiry date (in our study it was 82%), only 4.4% of the participants washed the vegetables with antiseptic materials (in our study it was 20.86%). Another study (20) showed that 70% of had correct respondents answer for knowledge. The knowledge and attitudes of health predicted 42.6% of the behavior; the attitude was between the knowledge and the practice. In our study, the rate of correct answers was 74% and the attitude was between the knowledge and the practice.

Another study (21) reported that the educated people had better practice than others, in our study the same results obtained. This study also showed that the knowledge and age are interdependent; in our study we found the same result.

**Limitations:** Our study subjects were those who visited health centers from different parts of the city.

# 5. Conclusion

The results of our study showed that the knowledge has led to attitude and the attitude has led to practice. With regard to the issues raised and the need for preventive measures, it is essential for people to start or continue training to improve their knowledge, attitude and practice and learn about factors influencing foodborne outbreaks.

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Appendix 1. Frequency of response to knowledge's question on water and foodborne outbreak

Row	Knowledge's Questions	Cor	rect	False A	Answer	Do not Know	
s		Ans	swer				
		No.	Perce	No.	Perce	No.	Perc
			nt		nt		ent
1	Food poisoning can be caused by bacteria in food or water?	531	91.55	17	2.93	32	5.52
2	Outbreaks of foodborne disease: when two or more people	377	65	70	12.07	133	22.93
	have similar illnesses resulting use of common foods?						
3	Washing hands before cooking and eating can help prevent	524	90.34	48	8.28	8	1.38
	foodborne illnesses?						
4	Washing herbs with water is enough?	508	87.59	54	9.31	18	3.1
5	Symptoms of foodborne disease are fever, diarrhea and	415	71.55	56	9.65	109	18.8
	vomiting?						
6	Disinfect vegetables may prevent the development of	501	86.38	42	7.24	37	6.38
	foodborne disease in humans?						
7	Ready food (fast food) causes less food poisoning?	508	87.59	46	7.93	26	4.48
8	Cholera can be transmitted through water and food?	412	71.03	44	7.59	124	21.38
9	Mince becomes corrupted soon?	334	57.59	188	32.41	58	10
10	Botulism is one of the causes of food poisoning?	257	44.31	23	3.97	300	51.72
11	Boiling of canned food can reduce food borne disease?	492	84.83	48	8.27	40	6.90
12	Microbial growth in refrigerated is greater than room	414	71.38	76	13.10	90	15.52
	temperature?						
13	Drinking well water can be caused to diarrhea?	464	80	42	7.24	74	12.76
14	Long maintenance of cooked food at room temperature is a	521	89.83	32	5.52	27	4.65
	cause of food poisoning?						
15	Microbial growth in food in summer is less than winter?	416	71.72	90	15.52	74	12.76
16	Drinking water contaminated with sewage can cause hepatitis	196	33.79	49	8.45	335	57.76
	A?						

Appendix 2. Frequency of response to attitude's questions on water and foodborne outbreak

лрре	spendix 2. Frequency of response to attitude s questions on water and foodborne outbreak									
Ro	Attitude's questions	Positi	ve attitude	Negativ	ve attitude	Do n	ot know			
ws	-	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent			
1	Reheating cooked food, makes me sure it is healthy.	269	46.38	214	36.90	97	16.72			
2	Washing vegetables with just water and dish soap is enough.	166	28.62	358	61.72	56	9.66			
3	If the door is swollen cans do not use it.	498	85.86	32	5.52	50	8.62			
4	Raw foods can be placed next to cooked foods in refrigerators.	357	61.55	87	15	136	23.45			
5	Putting bread in recycling bags is okay.	504	86.90	35	6.03	41	7.07			
6	After defrost of frozen food I can be re-frozen food again.	445	76.73	47	8.10	88	15.17			
7	Hats and gloves and special cooking clothes reduce food contamination during cooking.	449	77.41	45	7.76	86	14.83			
8	Food hygiene training is very important.	487	83.96	7	1.21	86	14.83			
9	Keeping cooked food over three days in the refrigerator is okay.	390	67.24	116	20	74	12.76			
10	In outbreak of cholera, you refused to eat vegetables at home	150	25.86	315	54.31	115	19.83			

Appendix 3. Freq	uency of res	ponse to attitude'	s statements on	water and foo	dborne outbreak

Row	Practice's Questions:	Excellent		Good		Bad		Very Bad	
	~	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1	Do you separate raw food from cooked food can?	364	62.76	121	20.86	66	11.38	29	5
2	Do you defrost frozen foods at room temperature?	136	23.45	128	22.07	185	31.89	131	22.59
3	Do you look expiry date before you buy a food product?	476	82.07	62	10.69	31	5.34	11	1.90
4	Do you wash the herbs with water, dish soap and disinfectant in your home?	121	20.86	93	16.04	89	15.34	277	47.76
5	Do you keep cooked food less than two hours at room temperature?	182	31.38	225	38.79	116	20	57	9.83
6	Do you wash your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet?	524	90.35	25	4.31	22	3.79	9	1.55
7	Do you go to the health center or hospital if you have diarrhea caused by food?	302	52.07	122	21.03	124	21.38	32	5.52
8	Do you use mineral water while traveling?	306	52.76	142	24.48	112	19.31	20	3.45
9	Do you carry cooked food on long trips?	205	35.35	268	46.21	64	11.03	43	7.41