

ABSTRACT

Background: Food-borne diseases are a leading public health problem in Uganda and have been linked to inadequacies in food safety. However, there is limited information about food safety practices among food handlers. This study investigated the factors associated with food safety practices among food handlers in restaurants/hotels in Nakawa Division in Kampala, Uganda during November 2021

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, data were collected from food handlers using a structured questionnaire, entered in EpiData, and analyzed in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Both numerical and categorical data were descriptively summarized. The Chi-square or Fisher's exact test was used to test differences in food safety practices while factors associated with food safety practices were determined using binary logistic regression expressed as adjusted odds ratio (aOR) and 95% confidence interval (CI). The level of statistical significance was set at $<5\%$.

Results: Of 121 participants studied, 68 (56.2%) were females while 59 (48.8%) were aged 18-30 years. The study found that 30.6% participants had knowledge of food safety and 20.7% had knowledge of personal hygienic practices. Lack of formal training on food safety and hygiene (aOR, 0.31; 95% CI, 0.14-0.68; $p = 0.004$) and disposal of wastes in a nearby bin (aOR, 0.35; 95% CI, 0.13-0.89; $p = 0.031$) were independently associated with food safety practices.

Conclusion: The level of knowledge about food safety and hygiene and personal hygienic practices among food handlers in Nakawa Division is low. Lack of training on food safety and hygiene and poor waste disposal are associated with food safety practices. The study recommends the training of food handlers on food safety practices would improve the knowledge of food handlers on food safety practice, knowledge of personal hygienic practice, and proper waste disposal.