

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICE
ON FOOD SAFETY AMONG SELECTED
COHORT OF WORKING ADULTS

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2009

ABSTRACT

Diseases spread through food remain a common and persistent problem worldwide. However, the disease is preventable provided that appropriate food-handling practices are adopted. This study aimed to determine knowledge, attitude, and practice towards food safety, and to explore its patterns of socio-demographic distribution. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and completed by 130 working adults from two companies in Johor Bahru ($n=65$) and Singapore ($n=65$). Results indicated most working adults (68.5%) had mediocre level of knowledge with a mean score of $54.0 \pm 17.4\%$. Attitude (3.66 ± 0.60) and practice (3.70 ± 0.58) were assessed through negative statements on 5-point Likert scale. White-collar workers (3.54 ± 0.57) showed a significantly ($P=0.022$) more negative food safety attitude than blue-collar workers (3.78 ± 0.61). Married respondents had significantly more positive attitude and practice than singles. Young (20 to 29 years old) and higher educated (degree holder) respondent had the highest knowledge score but most negative attitude. Singaporean (3.98 ± 0.68) had more positive ($P<0.01$) food safety attitude than Malaysian (3.54 ± 0.58). Chinese practised more unsafe behaviours ($P<0.05$) than Malay and Indian. Overall, attitude was positively correlated with practice ($r=0.289$, $P=0.001$) and knowledge ($r=-0.173$, $P=0.049$). Inadequate food safety knowledge can be reflected in more negative attitude and unsafe food-handling practice. A negative correlation ($r=-0.189$, $P=0.032$) was found between food safety practice and food-borne disease occurrence. The need of food safety education was reflected in this study. Increasing adoption of safe food handling practices by consumers should become an important aspect in food safety educational programmes.

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