

## **ABSTRACT**

There has been minimal research on student food safety knowledge, and food handling practices at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus. The aim of the study was to assess the food safety knowledge and food handling practices of undergraduate students residing on hall. The objectives were to assess the students' knowledge of safe food handling practices, to assess the food handling practices of undergraduate students and to determine whether females have a greater knowledge and practice of safe food handling techniques compared to males. Questions were asked on demographic characteristics of 100 respondents, reporting on food-borne illness (major food causing bacterium, origin of *Escherichia coli*), food safety knowledge (temperature, storage of food) and food safety practices (hand washing, raw meat storage, sanitization). 80% of the participants understood what a food borne illness was. 39% of the population regarded improper handling of food as the major contributor to incidence of a food borne illness. It was found that female participants had greater knowledge of food safety practices compared to the male students. 62% of the females knew what cross contamination was versus 20% of the males. 20% of the males felt that safe food handling practices were extremely effective in reducing incidence of a food borne illness versus 52% of the females. The participants revealed poor knowledge on the temperature and storage periods of food and revealed good practice of safe food handling techniques.

Key words: food borne illness, safe food handling practices, undergraduate students