

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE AND
PRACTICES OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST INDIES, ST. AUGUSTINE**

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Background: Foodborne illness is a growing public concern and, continues to affect millions of people each year. Therefore, food-related infection is an important health problem in many countries.

Objective: The objective of this study was to determine food safety knowledge and practices of students attending University of West Indies, St. Augustine. Other objectives included, to determine whether gender had a correlation with students' food safety knowledge and practices. Another objective was to prove that food safety practices are not entirely dependent on food safety knowledge.

Design: The sampling group was composed of randomly-selected 100 students that are 55 males and 45 females. 30-itemed questionnaire comprised of demographics, knowledge and practice questions. Five areas were tested under knowledge and practice questions, they were Proper hygiene, Cooking and Serving, Cross-Contamination, Defrost/Thaw, Reheat, and Proper Storage of foods.

They study found no significant correlation between any of the demographics (gender, age and year of study) with food safety knowledge or practices.

Results: The study found that food students had food safety knowledge of 56 % and their practices were 39%. This indicates that students have food safety knowledge but do not practice what they know. Even though the results indicate that students have the knowledge, 56% is still at an insufficient percentage level of food safety knowledge. If it was at a sufficient level, food safety practices would have been optimal level.

Conclusion: Educational efforts to fill the gap between food safety knowledge and practices are essential in order to prevent future illnesses and even death.