

An observational study of food safety practices by street vendors and microbiological quality of street-purchased hamburger beef patties in Trinidad, West Indies

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ABSTRACT: There has been minimal study on the food safety practices by street-food vendors in Trinidad, West Indies and little is known on the microbiological quality of street-purchased hamburgers. Microbiological analysis was conducted on 27 beef patties. Most (80.1%) vendors sold hamburgers from readily removable units. Only 10% of vending units had access to running water and refrigeration. Few (30%) vendors displayed their food handler's badge. Most wore hair restraints. Doneness of beef patties was judged solely by appearance. In all cases, the assemblage and serving of hamburgers was facilitated by the use of tongs. No to low microbial risk was noted in samples for 81.5% *Salmonella*, 71.4% *Staphylococcus aureus* and 96.3% *Escherichia coli* of samples. The presence of foodborne pathogens posed some potential risks to consumers.

Key words: Trinidad, street vendors, hamburger beef patties, microbiological quality, food safety
