Prevalence of *Listeria* Species in Ready-to-Eat Food in Shahrekord Restaurants

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Abstract

Background and Objective: *Listeria* bacteria with worldwide widespread are commonly found in soil, sewage, dust and water. Among which,*Listeria monocytogenes* can cause a serious food-borne disease. The objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence of *Listeria* species in ready-to-eat foods**.**

Material and Methods: The samples (n=235) including oloveyh salad (n = 64), Yogurt stew (n= 35), vegetable salad (n=52), macaroni salad (n= 48) and meat salad (n =36) were collected from the restaurants in Shahrekord, Iran. Enrichment and selective media were used to determine the prevalence of *Listeria* species. .

Results: The results showed that 8.5 % of the samples were infected by Listeria spp. The highest were isolated from vegetable salad (17.3%) and the lowest from macaroni salad (4.2%). *Listeria monocytogenes* was isolated from 7 samples (3.0%). Other isolated species were *L.innocua* (4.7%) and *L.seeligeri* (0.9%).

Conclusion: It seems that eating ready-to- eat food or raw and undercooked foods has the potential risk of contamination to the *Listeria* species.

Keywords*: Listeria*, Ready- to- Eat Food, Shahrekord