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Prevalence of pathogenic bacteria in traditional foods of Pakistan: A scenario of underdeveloped countries

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Traditional foods are composite foods which has nourished our ancestors throughout history. Traditional foods have enhanced the risk of foodborne illnesses in growing population of Pakistan due to emergence of resistant enteric bacterial pathogens. Aim of this study was the microbial evaluation and safety assessment of most commonly consumed traditional foods sold in various markets of Faisalabad. To aid regulatory agencies about the safety status of traditional foods most consumed by people. Samples were collected from different street vendors of Faisalabad. Enumeration of pathogens was done through spread plate method followed by biochemical confirmatory testing. This study found that mean prevalence of *Listeria*, *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and Total Plate Count (TPC) was 25%, 25%, 16.70% and 75% respectively in samples. Highest count of *Listeria*, *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and TPC in samples was 9.2×10^3 , 4.2×10^3 , 1.5×10^3 and 7.0×10^7 CFU/g, respectively. The findings depicted satisfactory safety status of 67%, 92%, 75% and 67% samples for *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria* and TPC, respectively. These results emphasize on food hygiene training, enhancement of quality control and safety programs to reduce risk of consumer's exposure to foodborne infections. This research served as a beneficial tool for awareness of consumer and a significant breakthrough in relieving the plight of food safety in our country.

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