Challenges to Foodborne Diseases

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Abstract

Foodborne diseases continue to be one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality. In 2015, World Health Organization (WHO) released the first ever global estimates of foodborne diseases. Results showed that almost 1 out of 10 people suffer from illness caused by eating or drinking contaminated food or beverage. Consequently, about 420,000 people die from foodborne diseases each year. (WHO, 2015)



The increasing incidence of foodborne diseases can be attributed to changes in food production, processing and preparation methods as well as changes in food consumption patterns and lifestyles, globalization of food market and increasing environmental pollution and climate change. (Nyenje and Ndip, 2013)

The complex battle against foodborne diseases is even aggravated by the diversity of causative agents. According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases there are over 250 foodborne diseases caused by different types of bacteria, viruses, parasites, biological toxins and harmful chemicals. (Oyarzabal, 2012)

WHO has identified the 10 key hazards that could cause foodborne diseases based on the severity and Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs). These include Listeria, Brucella, Cholera, Hepatitis A, Toxoplasmosis, Pork tapeworm, Echinococcus tapeworms, Chinese Liver Fluke, Aflatoxin and Cyanide. (WHO, 2015)

Researches also showed that children are particularly at risk of having foodborne diseases due to immature immune systems making them more susceptible to diseases. (Oyarzabal, 2012) In fact, approximately 33% of all deaths associated with foodborne diseases are from children under 5 years old. (WHO, 2015)

Aside from these, a new range of foodborne pathogen has emerged because of the changes in the dynamics of our diets and lifestyles hence the food industry as a whole. Thus a need for surveillance system should be established in order to monitor and investigate foodborne disease outbreaks since most of the cases were left unreported. (Nyenje and Ndip, 2013)

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Biography

Elaine Grace S. Gatdula is Certified Food Safety Professional. She is a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Nutrition at the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, a Registered Nutritionist-Dietitian, a Health and Fitness Advocate, passionate with so many different things in life. She has been working in the foodservice industry for more than 10 years with vast experiences from Quick Service to Casual Dining Restaurants and even large scale Catering and Hotel Food Service Operations. She is very passionate about sharing my knowledge and skills to other people especially when it comes to food safety.

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