P26: Practices of receiving fish products and the sensory perception of its quality by food operators: the importance of training programs

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Introduction: Food safety is an important issue worldwide, once foodborne diseases are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality. The selection of reliable suppliers and inspection of incoming raw materials/ingredients are crucial to guarantee the safety of food. Regarding to the freshness of fish products it can be perceived in sensory terms by sight, touch, smell and taste. Food operators should therefore be effectively trained to ensure that inspection procedures are adequately performed.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the practices of receiving fish products and the sensory perception its quality by food operators before and after applying a training program.

Materials and Methods: The survey was performed in twenty food establishments. The practices of receiving were assessed by using a check-list based on *Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004*, which compile: structural and hygiene requirements; temperature control and hygiene conditions of transport; and incoming records. The sensory perception was assessed, before and after applying a training program, by using a questionnaire based on the *Assessment Method of Freshness of Fish - QIM*, which consists of two sections: information about the incoming of fish products (hygiene requirements; temperature control and records) and fish sensory attributes (appearance of eyes and gills, odour, mucus of skin and texture of flesh).

Results and Discussion: Overall, the practices of receiving meet the legal requirements; however, probably due to 80% of establishments do not own an appropriate thermometer, 55% and 75% of the establishments do not check/record the temperature of transport and raw-materials/ingredients, respectively. There was a significant improvement in the number of correct answers (20% to 70%) after applying the training program, especially regarding to the incoming of fish products.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of continuous training programs, which ensure that food operators remain aware of procedures necessary to maintain the safety of food.

References

1. Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004, 29th April, of the European Parliament and Council. Official Journal of European Union, L139, 1-54.