Enterococci belong to the group of lactic acid bacteria and are widely distributed in nature. The genera comprises more than 20 species, but Enterococcus faecium and Enterococcus faecalis are the most prevalent species in foods. Some enterococci are bacteriocinogenic and capable to inhibit the growth of certain pathogens and spoilage microorganisms, presenting a great potential in food preservation. Enterococci can be used in the food industry as starter or probiotic cultures. However, enterococci are also implicated in severe multi-resistant nosocomial infections. In this study, the prevalence of enterococci in selected was evaluated.

In this study, the diluted homogenates were plated on M-17 medium and azide agar medium was used aerobically for the isolation of Enterococci. The plates were incubated at 37°C for 2-3 days. The isolates were examined microscopically and checked for Gram reaction and for catalase production using 3% (v/v) H₂O₂ on single colonies. Carbohydrate fermentation tests were carried out using the API kit according to the manufacturer’s instruction. Ribotyping was performed with a RiboPrinter Microbial Characterization System and the standard EcoRI DNA preparation kit as described in the manufacturer’s operations. Antagonistic activity screening was investigated by two methods agar spot test and well diffusion assay. The amount of produced lactic acid, hydrogen peroxide, proteolytic activity of the lactic acid bacteria was also determined. From the 30 pasteurized milk samples analyzed, 55 % were positive for enterococci, pasteurized milk being the most contaminated. E. faecium was the predominant species.