Practices, knowledge and attitude of street food handlers regarding food hygiene in South West Nigeria.

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**Introduction:** There are increased interests worldwide on the importance of street food as part of a general concern for food security and health. There have been noticeable increases of street food handlers in South-West, Nigeria. Most of the food handlers are not regulated; they operate haphazardly without any monitoring of what they prepare and how they prepare it. This study aims to obtain current information on the knowledge, attitude and practises of food safety by street food handlers in South West Nigeria. Information gathered from this study could be used by health officers in the development of strategic plans towards regulating safe street food handling, preparation and vending within the area.

**Methods:** Data on demographics, food safety knowledge and practices was collected from 280 food handlers using a 67-questions standardized survey tool.

**Results:** Few vendors (12%) acquired their knowledge of food preparation by formal training. Only 31% of the respondents had health certificate to indicate that they have carried out the annual recommended physical and medical examination. About 70% of the vendors had no knowledge of the need to wash hands after handling money. Four major categories of street food observed were processed foods, soups and sauces, main meals and snacks. Volume and price are considered more than freshness and cleanliness when purchasing raw materials.

**Conclusion:** Some of the food safety knowledge of the vendors could not be translated to practice due to the absence of basic facilities such as water and toilets at their vending sites. Training on hygiene and sanitation; provision of basic infrastructures and the establishment of code of practice for the street food industry is recommended.