Risk perception acts as a guide for decisions about behavior, and can be related with personal variables. The purpose of this study was to evaluate risk perception of foodborne disease by school food handlers and its relation with education level and age. It occurred in school kitchens of Brazilian public schools linked to the National School Feeding Program – NSFP. It was made in all cities (nine) of Baixada Santista - Brazil. A stratified random sample of schools was calculated. A structured questionnaire was designed to evaluate the risk perception of foodborne disease of 84 school food handlers from 59 schools. It contains seven questions about storage of food, personal-environmental-food hygiene. Responses were given through a 10 centimeters structured scale anchored with the descriptors of intensity ranging from "no risk" to "high risk". The average age of food handlers was 40.28 (± 9.75). A negative correlation was found between age and risk perception. Younger food handlers demonstrate higher risk perception of storing perishable foods in ambient temperature ($r=-0.191 \ p=0.04$) and offering cooked meals two hours after preparation ($r=-0.255 \ p=0.008$). The years may decrease the perception of risk and strengthen the optimistic bias (in which individuals believe negative events rarely happen with them). No relationship between the education level and foodborne disease perceived risk was found. Perhaps the level of education exerts low influence on the knowledge of safe food and its risks because food safety is a specific content that is barely seen in elementary and secondary education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank CAPES – BRAZIL study sponsors.