MICROBIOLOGICAL QUALITY OF FISHBURGER AND MINCED MEAT MADE FROM TILAPIA

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The tilapia (Oreochromis sp) is an exotic species, adapted and grown in the northeastern dams representing economic importance to the region. Fish farming has grown considerably worldwide while the production of tilapia in the state of Ceará is primarily intended for domestic consumption. This fish meat has been acknowledged for having a great market potential as its two conditions: industrialized and fresh, meet consumer needs in the economic, nutritional and sensory aspects. However, there are no studies to attest the quality of products made from this raw material. This study aims to evaluate the microbiological contamination of fishburger and minced meat made from the tilapia sold in the city of Jaguaribara, Ceará/Brazil. The samples were collected, deposited in thermal containers and sent to the Microbiology Laboratory of the Instituto Federal do Ceará at Limoeiro do Norte Campus, where analyses were carried out for the determination of Coliforms at 35°C and 45°C and *Escherichia coli*, using the technique of multiple tube (most probable number - MPN). The count of Coliforms at 35°C and 45°C, for both products showed values exceeding 2,400 MPN.g⁻¹. In the determination of *E. coli* it was observed that fishburger samples have shown positive results while minced meat, negative ones, indicating positive for *Enterobacter aerogenes*. These results indicate a low standard hygienic and sanitary processing or recontamination post-processing from the raw, dirty equipment or poor handling that was evidenced by the high contamination of the products analyzed by classifying the samples as unfit for human consumption.