COUNT OF Staphylococcus spp AND COAGULASE-POSITIVE Staphylococci FROM FRESH RICOTA CHEESE SOLD IN THE CITY OF NITERÓI, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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The ricotta cheese is a cheese obtained by the precipitation of proteins from cheese whey by acidification associated with the heat. While receiving these treatments, many factors can recontaminate it after the processing, making it susceptible to contamination by Staphylococcus spp and Staphylococcus coagulase positive. The presence of Staphylococcus coagulase positive may determine the production of enterotoxin that can cause outbreaks of food poisoning. The aim of this study was to evaluate the quality of fresh ricotta, by Staphylococcus spp and Staphylococcus coagulase positive. We evaluated 10 samples of fresh ricotta cheese from different trademarks commercialized in the retail of Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, according to Brazilian official methodology. For Staphylococcus spp, held the Baird Parker agar plating. After incubation, typical colonies were subcultured in tubes containing broth “Brain Heart Infusion” and incubated. The strains in smears stained by Gram’s method showed gram-positive cocci were submitted to catalase and coagulase tests. Of the samples analyzed, 100% (10/10) of the samples had inadequate microbiological quality for human consumption. We also detected the presence of coagulase positive in 50% (5/10) of the samples, which are at odds with legal microbiological standards. It is concluded that they have poor microbiological quality, endangering the health of consumers. It is necessary tightening during processing of fresh ricotta cheese, and look better post-processing conditions, particularly at refrigerator temperature suitable for its preservation, in order to ensure better quality and consumer safety.