TRACEABILITY OF FOODS - IMPORTANT TOOL TO ASSURE SAFE AND HEALTHY RAW CHICKEN MEAT

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Several diseases in humans are caused by the consumption of foods of animal origin contaminated with *Salmonella, Staphylococcus, Escherichia, Campylobacter* and *Listeria*. Inadequate sanitary conditions during slaughtering and handling, in addition to improper cooking and storage techniques associated with poor hygiene during the processing of meat products are all factors that may cause people to develop illnesses and infections or become asymptomatic carriers. Depending on the microorganism involved, symptoms may range from slight intestinal discomfort to severe dehydration or hemorrhagic diarrhea and ultimately, death. The results show that 21% of the samples analysed tested positive for *Salmonella* sp, 9% for *Listeria monocytogenes* and 25% for *Campylobacter jejuni*. The results were similar to those reported by Watson & Brown in 1975, Sharma in 1992 and Izaf et al in 1991. In this study, 25% of the samples analyzed tested positive for *Campylobacter jejuni*, thereby confirming that chicken meat is a potential source for the dissemination of *Campylobacter* infections (campylobacteriosis). Within this context, the traceability of foods constitutes an important tool to assure safe and healthy food products since the traceability concept requires the implementation of effective control measures in all the stages of production, processing, shipping, distribution and commercialization. The findings of this study show that the main bacterial agents involved in foodborne toxifications continue to be present in chicken meat and that prevention and control measures should be implemented throughout the production cycle of these foods.