Foodborne illness outbreaks associated with manufacturing and catering environments remain a public health concern. The food handler is often one of the key causes of foodborne illness, and has been frequently cited as a significant contributory factor for foodborne illness in restaurant-associated outbreaks.1

International, cross-sectional, insufficient heat treatment of foods, inadequate refrigerated storage of food, inadequate hand decontamination practices and improper cleaning of food contact surfaces are the most common contributory factors associated with the transmission of foodborne infection.4,8

Consequently, the UK Food Standard Agency have recommendations in place for food businesses to ensure food safety relating to the four key areas of cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling and cooking.8 Food-handler implementation and adherence of such recommendations are essential.

Subsequently, there is a need to assess the food safety cognition and behaviour of professional food handlers in the food sector. Numerous studies have been conducted involving professional food-handlers, however, to date, a review of the food safety knowledge, attitudes, self-reported practices and observed behaviours of professional food handlers in the food sector has not been conducted.

The purpose of the study was to review the methods and measures utilised in research studies to assess the food-safety awareness and practices of professional food-handlers in catering and manufacturing environments.

Methods

Data Collection: An inclusion exclusion criteria was devised to identify primary research studies suitable for inclusion. Professional food-handlers were those responsible for the preparation, service or sale of food products to/consumers, are likely to have undergone food safety training and food handling occurring outside of the domestic environment.

Data capture: A database was devised to capture primary research data regarding the food safety knowledge, self-reported practices, attitudes and behaviour of professional food handlers. Identified research studies were reviewed, and findings were summarised and recorded using the database.

Ethical Approval: Approval was obtained from the Health Care and Food Ethics Panel at Cardiff Metropolitan University.