Food Safety Cognition of Parents with Young Children and the Potential Use of Online Parenting Communities to Obtain Food Safety Information.

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dangerous, it is also extremely important that parents ensure that they are aware of any potential food safety issues that may affect their children.

Introduction

Studies have shown the importance of food safety education and promotion to help prevent foodborne illness. This study aimed to explore the perceptions and practices of parents with young children regarding food safety, and to investigate the potential for online parenting communities to provide food safety information.

Methods

Self-completed questionnaire: An online self-completed questionnaire, distributed using social media was completed by parents of children (aged 0–5years) aged 16–23 years old. The questionnaire was anonymous and voluntary, and no personal information was collected.

Netnography: Data were collected by monitoring food safety-related forum threads (n=25) and all replies containing (n=489) from the UK-based popular online parenting site Mumsnet were reviewed and analyzed using an interpretative approach to explore peer-to-peer sharing of food safety advice or promotion of food safety information.

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

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine the food safety knowledge and self-completion in parents with young children and the potential use of online parenting communities to obtain food safety information.

Results

Use-by date: The use by date was determined by the child’s growth pattern. To ensure food remains safe for consumption.

56% were aware that the use by date indicated the last date that the product was safe to consume.

91% were more likely to adhere to use-by dates if the food was intended for a child and themselves.

Trusted sources of food safety information and reported usage of online-parenting communities: The most trusted sources for food safety information were medical professionals (80%), reliable friends (78%), and general practitioners (76%).

45% reported using online parenting communities to obtain food safety information.

Figure 5. Response referring to NHS guidelines. Figures 6 and 7 refer to the need to follow such guidelines.

Examples of food safety questions posted on forums:

Examples of response to food safety forum questions:

Figure 8. Response referring to NHS guidelines.

Figure 9. Response referring to Unicef guidelines.

Figure 10. Response referring to correct information.

Figure 11. Response referring to advice given verbally by healthcare practitioner.

Examples of support for food safety practices:

Many comments that suggested for recommended potential food safety malpractices, often indicated they were aware that they were not adhering to guidelines and preferred advice for helping them to identify the correct practice.

Although parents are knowledgeable of some key aspects of domestic food safety when preparing food for young children, gaps exist and food safety malpractices are reported implemented.

The potential role of online parenting communities in obtaining food safety forum questions.

Completion of the netnography study has identified the need to explore the potential of positively influencing parenting social media platforms to effectively communicate the importance of domestic food safety to parents when preparing food for young children.

Significance of study

The researchers wish to acknowledge the parents that participated in the questionnaire to allow completion of this study.

Acknowledgements

The netnography study reviewed and analyzed publicly accessible comments from the UK-based popular online parenting forum to explore patterns of food safety malpractice in an online parenting community, they were likely of correcting the advice if it was given to a friend. However, fewer (74%) stated they would correct the advice if it came from a friend.

References


Handouts

All posters from the ZEROFive Food Industry Centre are available for download from: http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/health/zerofive/research