Case study A - Conclusions

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ANSWERS

Investigation findings

Bacillus cereus **was isolated from the faecal specimens of those people who had been ill and also from the remains of the risotto. The risotto was therefore the vehicle and the rice the original source of the bacteria.**

The rice had been cooked at 12.00 noon Friday 10th November. After cooking it had been left to cool at room temperature overnight. It was then transported unrefrigerated. It was reheated by microwave oven just prior to service.

Explanation

The rice contained spores of *Bacillus cereus*. Normal cooking is incapable of destroying spores, in fact the heat activates the spores so that on long slow cooling they germinate and produce large numbers of vegetative bacteria. The bacteria multiply and produce toxins (this is the main hazard). These toxins are heat resistant and would not have been destroyed by normal cooking methods including the use of the microwave.

Controls

The main control is to serve the rice immediately after cooking or keep the rice above 63°C prior to serving or to cool the rice rapidly, for example with cold running water. The rice should then be refrigerated at below 5°C.

The rice should then be reheated thoroughly and only allowed to be at room temperature for a short period of time (maximum 30 minutes), during further preparation or waiting to be served.