Case histories

HANDOUT
HO
23a
MODULE 5

Hepatitis A

A lady who drank a glass of ice water was one of the 30 diners who developed Hepatitis A after visiting the Hoggsbreath Bar.The virus resulted in nausea, fever, stomach cramps, malaise and jaundice.

On March 10th the manager of the Hoggsbreath sent home a cook who was not feeling well. After examination by a doctor who advised the cook had a respiratory infection, she was allowed to return to work. A week later the cook developed jaundice and laboratory diagnosis confirmed Hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A has an incubation period of up to 7 weeks and hundreds of people were exposed to the risk.

Protective immune globulin injection given within two weeks of exposure can offer some protection.

The lady was off work for six weeks and joined a class-action lawsuit against the Hoggsbreath. The owner's wife also developed Hepatitis A. The cook left Hoggsbreath to work for another restaurant, which has not been identified.

The cause of this outbreak was probably the failure of the cook to wash her hands correctly after using the toilet. Even a microscopic amount of faecal material will contain sufficient viral particles to contaminate food and equipment throughout the kitchen.

In the USA ill or infected food handlers are considered to be involved in a much greater percentage of foodborne outbreaks than in the UK. In some states one out of every three outbreaks is attributable to ill or infected food handlers (mainly viral).

HANDOUT
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23b
MODULE 5

Dysentery

In 1998 a food handler employed at Ciatti's Restaurant infected a seafood salad with Shigella bacteria. 30 people became ill, including a lawyer and his wife who received $140,000 in compensation.

Also in 1998 hundreds of consumers became ill with dysentery following the consumption of parsley. The parsley was contaminated with Shigella at a farm in Mexico and allegedly was not removed by the washing procedure adopted by the restaurants.

Listeria

In 1998 hotdogs and luncheon meat from a factory in the USA resulted in 80 ill people and 21 deaths.

Case history involving *E. coli* O157

HANDOUT
HO
23c(i)
MODULE 5

John Barr and Sons, Wishaw, Scotland

John Barr and Sons was a large, popular butchers and bakers shop in Wishaw, Scotland. The business operated as a local retail outlet but, unknown to the food authority, also provided a large amount of wholesale meat .

Prior to 1996 John Barr had been voted Butcher of the Year and it appeared on the surface, that the premises were clean and well organised.

From November until December 1996 John Barr was alleged to have poisoned over 500 people by supplying them with cooked meat contaminated with *E. coli* O157. The incident involved three documented outbreaks and a large number of sporadic cases which were traced back to John Barr. In addition to a large number of people suffering an extremely serious and unpleasant illness, a total of 21 deaths were alleged to have resulted amongst those consuming contaminated cooked meat purchased from Barrs or shops supplied by Barrs.

Outbreak 1

The lunch at Wishaw Old Parish Church on Sunday 17th
At noon on Saturday 16th November a John Barr employee delivered two 15lbs bags of cooked stew and pastry tops to the Wishaw Church kitchen

The meat was unrefrigerated overnight. Surplus gravy was drained off and not served with the meal. When tested a week later the gravy was found to contain *E. coli* O157. Swabs taken from surfaces in John Barr's shop on 23rd November revealed the same strain of *E. coli* O157.

It is thought that either the stew was not cooked at sufficient temperature for sufficient time to destroy *E. coli* O157 at John Barrs or that the stew and/or bags became contaminated after cooking. It is likely that the *E. coli* O157 multiplied after cooking and overnight, and survived the reheating in the church ovens.

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Outbreak 2

Bankview Nursing Home, Kilsyth

Sandwiches consumed on 23/24th November and prepared with cold, cooked meat purchased from a Scotmid shop in Haggs at around 11 a.m. on Saturday 23rd November. The meat included smoked ham, chopped pork, meat loaf, brisket and chicken roll. John Barr supplied cooked meat to the Scotmid shop but not any of the meat used to prepare the sandwiches.

Five elderly residents died between 6th December 1996 and 11th April 1997.

It is thought the original contaminated cooked meat was supplied to Scotmid by John Barr and that cross-contamination occurred, either by the slicing machine or a tray on which several cooked meats were placed.

Outbreak 3

Birthday party at the Cascade Public House

It is thought that cooked meat supplied by John Barr was responsible for the outbreak, involving twenty five people. As it was an eighteenth birthday party, very few elderly and young persons were involved and there were no deaths.

In addition to these three outbreaks, there were a large number of sporadic cases and eight deaths involving elderly people who had consumed products supplied by John Barr (either directly or indirectly from premises supplied by John Barr).