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## Food Hygiene's Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices between Urban and Suburban Adolescents

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### Abstract

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between urban and suburban about the impact of parental influences towards food hygiene practices. The test revealed that there are no statistically significant difference between urban and suburban ( $t = 0.779$ ,  $df = 394.29$ ,  $p > 0.001$ ). Urban adolescents ( $M = 19.615$ ,  $SD = 3.024$ ) reported significantly equal with the overall parental influences suburban adolescents ( $M = 19.390$ ,  $SD = 2.743$ ). The result indicates that similar parental influences due to increased food safety awareness and information communication technology can be easily passed down to their children.

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**Keywords:** Food hygiene; food safety; parental influences; adolescent

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### 1. Introduction

Food is a product that is rich in nutrients required by the microorganism and maybe exposed to

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contamination and deterioration. Every day, millions of people get sick from the food that they eat. This is called food-borne illness. Both developed and undeveloped countries faced this situation (World Health Organization, 2007) [WHO]. Hence, food safety is not only related to people's health, but it is also related to the foundation of social stability and development of various undertaking. One of the major public-health problems in developing countries is the prevention of diarrhea. Every year, 1.5 million cases of diarrhea are reported in developing countries. Unfortunately, this figure remained more or less constant for almost 20 years. Each year, 2.5 million people die because of diarrhea and most of the cases involve children aged less than 5 years. In Bangladesh, the cases of diarrhea among children also a concern for this country because the morbidity cases among children in 2000 were 11.3% which the estimated annual number of children who die to diarrhea was 7900. There are a lot of negative impacts of diarrhea such as malnutrition, leading to impaired physical growth and cognitive development. Therefore, the prevention of diarrhea is important because it is better to prevent than cure. Food safety is a broad topic. Food safety is defined as the degree of confidence that food will not cause sickness or harm to the consumer when it is prepared, served and eaten according to its intended use (WHO, 2007). Food-borne illness or also known as food poisoning is defined as diseases, usually either infectious or toxic in nature, caused by agents that enter the food through the ingestion of food (WHO, 2007). One of the factors that contribute to diarrhea is inadequate food hygiene. Almost 70% of the main causes of diarrhea are regarded as food born. Most children in West Africa, Bangladesh, and Peru, are given weaning food, and this food contains a lot of bacteria. Besides, the other factors that contribute to diarrhea are food contamination. Cholera, typhoid, dysentery, viral hepatitis A and food poisoning that are known as food and water borne diseases are caused by food or water intake that had been contaminated. According to Ministry of Health, food and water borne diseases can lead to the permanent health problem and disability, and it can cause death if the person is not treated immediately. According to Bloomfield and Scott, studies had shown that 50 to 80 percent foodborne *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* occur in the home. When consumers prepared food at home, most of them practice the variety of poor and bad hygiene (Worsfold, Griffith, 1996, 1997). 95.4percent are failing to implement basic food hygiene practices. It shows that most of the consumers are the lack of knowledge about food safety and how to practice it in daily activities. In Malaysia, the number of food borne illnesses had increased from 1999 until 2011 and had decreased on 2012 (Department of Statistics, 2013). The number of cases for cholera, typhoid and viral hepatitis A had decreased from 2011 to 2012. However, the number of dysenteries had increased compared to 2011. Most of the cases occurred in education and learning institution such school canteen, dining hall, and hostels. Parents play important roles while educating their child about food hygiene (Golan et al., 2006). This is because parents can influence their children greatly (Rimal, 2003). Besides, according to Tucker (2009), parents also play important roles to creating a healthy home environment, serving as a role model (Ventura & Birch, 2008) and last but not least, making the decision for their children (Golan & Crow, 2004). Parents have to spend more time with their children, show them the correct way of food hygiene practices and, doing thing together. As the result, they can learn and be influenced by their parents in a correct way of learning food hygiene. As the first step, a survey that related to parental influences towards the food hygiene practices was conducted between Shah Alam and Puncak Alam adolescents.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### *2.1. Subject's selection and recruitments*

A cross-sectional study was conducted from May to August 2015 to assess the impact of parental influences towards the food hygiene practices among adolescents. This research was focused on

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