

Investigation of The First Indigenous Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* Infection, Taiwan, 2019

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Abstract

In April 2019, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control had confirmed an indigenous enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC O104:H4) infected case. This was the first case since 2001, included one confirmed and two suspected cases. In this report, we investigated two self-service barbecue restaurants which were at high risk of infection. We collected specimens from contacts, food handlers, food samples and environmental samples for enteric pathogen testing. Specimens from contacts, food handlers and environmental samples were tested negative. Beef from one of the restaurants was tested positive for enteropathogenic *E. coli*, however, with different O antigen. Also, shiga-like toxin gene tests were all negative. Therefore, the beef from the restaurant was not the vehicle. Moreover, the food samples were not the same batches except that the restaurant was the only place served to the index case. We could not exclude the risk of EHEC contamination of beef. *E. coli* could be killed at 75°C for 1 minute. We recommend that self-service barbecue restaurants should remind consumers of the health risk with undercooked foods.

Keywords: Indigenous case, enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* infection, EHEC, foodborne disease, epidemiological investigation

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Received: Jan. 20, 2020

Accepted: May. 21, 2020

DOI: 10.6525/TEB.202207_38(13).0001