

**KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE ON FOOD SAFETY AND ISOLATION OF
STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS ON HAND SWABS OF FOOD HANDLERS IN
SELECTED SCHOOLS, MANDALAY**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this cross sectional descriptive study was to assess the level of knowledge and practices in food safety and the isolation of *Staphylococcus aureus* on the hands of food handlers in the selected basic education high schools of five downtown townships in Mandalay. First, 180 food handlers were interviewed by a semi-structured questionnaire to assess their food safety knowledge and practices. After that hand swabs were taken from these food handlers and samples were sent to Public Health Laboratory, Mandalay for isolation of *Staphylococcus aureus*. The findings showed that most of the handlers (90.6%) were female and majority (97.2%) had pre-employment medical examination. But all food handlers had no training about food safety during their working duration. Regarding knowledge status, (53.9%) had higher level of knowledge on food safety. Likewise, (55.6%) revealed good practice. As per bacterial contamination, (13.9%) of hand swab samples were positive for *Staphylococcus aureus*. The lower knowledge and poor practice status of food handlers were still present more than 40% in the study. Training and health education on food safety to food handlers are still needed to be improved. The presence of *Staphylococcus aureus* isolation on hand swabs pointed that closed monitoring and supervision to food handlers are also needed.