

## [Keynote Talk]: Surveillance of Food Safety Compliance of Hong Kong Street Food

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**Abstract :** This study is a pilot surveillance of hygiene compliance and food microbial safety of both licensed and mobile vendors selling Chinese ready-to-eat snack foods in Hong Kong. The study reflects similar situations in running mobile food vending business on trucks. Hong Kong is about to launch the Food Truck Pilot Scheme by the end of 2016 or early 2017. Technically, selling food on the vehicle is no different from hawking food on the street or vending food on the street. Each type of business bears similar food safety issues and cast the same impact on public health. Present findings demonstrate exemplarily situations that also apply to food trucks. 9 types of Cantonese style snacks of 32 samples in total were selected for microbial screening. A total of 16 vending sites including supermarkets, street markets, and snack stores were visited. The study finally focused on a traditional snack, the steamed rice cake with red beans called Put Chai Ko (PCK). PCK is a type of classical Cantonese pastry sold on push carts on the street. It used to be sold at room temperature and served with bamboo sticks in the old days. Some shops would have them sold steam fresh. Microbial examinations on aerobic counts, yeast, and mould, coliform, salmonella as well as Staphylococcus aureus detections were carried out. Salmonella was not detected in all samples. Since PCK does not contain ingredients of beef, poultry, eggs or dairy products, the risk of the presence of Salmonella in PCK was relatively lower although other source of contamination might be possible. Coagulase positive Staphylococcus aureus was found in 6 of the 14 samples sold at room temperature. Among these 6 samples, 3 were PCK. One of the samples was in an unacceptable range of total colony forming units higher than 10<sup>5</sup>. The rest were only satisfactory. Observational evaluations were made with checklists on personal hygiene, premises hygiene, food safety control, food storage, cleaning and sanitization as well as waste disposals. The maximum score was 25 if total compliance were obtained. The highest score among vendors was 20. Three stores were below average, and two of these stores were selling PCK. Most of the non-compliances were on food processing facilities, sanitization conditions and waste disposal. In conclusion, although no food poisoning outbreaks happened during the time of the investigation, the risk of food hazard existed in these stores, especially among street vendors. Attention is needed in the traditional practice of food selling, and that food handlers might not have sufficient knowledge to properly handle food products. Variations in food qualities existed among supply chains or franchise eateries or shops. It was commonly observed that packaging and storage conditions are not properly enforced in the retails. The same situation could be reflected across the food business. It did indicate need of food safety training in the industry and loopholes in quality control among business.

**Keywords :** cantonese snacks, food safety, microbial, hygiene, street food

**Conference Title :** ICFSP 2017 : International Conference on Food Safety and Packaging

**Conference Location :** Singapore, Singapore

**Conference Dates :** January 08-09, 2017