



ABSTRACTS: VOLUME 8, SPECIAL ISSUE {8th Undergraduate Conference}

A KAP STUDY ABOUT AWARENESS OF BACTERIAL CONTAMINATION RISKS IN WATER AND FOOD AMONG POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY WAR AND DISPLACEMENT

Affnan Rebhi Soliman Baraka¹, Dana Younis Soliman Alnaqa¹, Abdelraouf A. Elmanama¹, Renad Abu Dan¹

Supervisor: Abdelraouf A. Elmanama¹, Renad Abu Dan¹

¹ Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Islamic University, Gaza, Palestine

Abstract: The ongoing war in Gaza has severely disrupted daily life, leading to mass displacement, the collapse of infrastructure, and worsening public health conditions. Over 1.9 million people are displaced, many of whom are living in overcrowded shelters with poor sanitation, unsafe water, and inadequate hygiene facilities. These conditions increase the risk of bacterial contamination of food and water, fueling the spread of diarrheal diseases, intestinal infections, and other preventable illnesses. Vulnerable groups, such as children and the elderly, are particularly affected due to malnutrition and limited healthcare access. This study aims to assess the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of populations affected by war and displacement in Gaza regarding bacterial contamination of food and water. It also seeks to examine the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender, education, and displacement status) and awareness levels, while identifying gaps that hinder safe hygiene practices. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among displaced populations in Gaza between September and December 2024. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on knowledge of contamination sources, attitudes toward hygiene and prevention, and daily practices in food handling and water storage. Demographic data were also recorded to explore associations with awareness and practices. Preliminary findings show poor hygiene conditions across shelters, with most participants reporting limited access to clean water and safe food storage. While general awareness of contamination risks was moderate, preventive practices were inconsistent. Many families relied on unsafe or unknown water sources and lacked adequate training in hygiene measures. The study highlights significant gaps between knowledge and practices regarding bacterial contamination among displaced populations in Gaza. Addressing these gaps requires targeted health interventions, awareness campaigns, and international humanitarian support to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions in displacement settings.

Key Words: Gaza, bacterial contamination, food safety, water safety, displacement, KAP study, infectious diseases.