Introduction

Approximately 48 million cases of foodborne illness occur annually in the U.S., yielding 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths (Scallan et al., 2011).

Young children are highly susceptible to foodborne illnesses.

Schools serve an estimated 32 million meals daily through the National School Lunch Program (USDA, 2011).

In the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, Congress mandated schools to adopt a food safety program based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.

To-date, no studies have validated the effectiveness of these programs.

Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess the status and effectiveness of HACCP implementation in schools since the 2004 Child Nutrition and Reauthorization Act.

Specific objectives include:
- Identify which components of the HACCP system and prerequisite programs have been implemented.
- Determine specific challenges and barriers school foodservice directors and employees experienced in implementing and maintaining their HACCP plan.
- Determine the relationships between HACCP program implementation and actual food safety behaviors.

Methodology

Schools will be categorized based on total enrollment:
- Small (< 2,500 students)
- Medium (2,500 - 19,999 students)
- Large (20,000 - 44,999 students)
- Mega (> 45,000 students)

One state from each of the USDA seven regions will be selected.

Within each state, the largest mega school district will be chosen. A large, medium, and small district will then be randomly chosen within a 200 miles radius of each mega district (n=35 schools).

Methodology, Continued

Within each district, one school will be randomly chosen to participate in the study.

Trained researchers will visit each school to conduct a HACCP inspection.

A HACCP Verification Checklist will be utilized to conduct the inspections.

SPSS will be utilized to calculate descriptive statistics and correlations.

Conclusions & Applications

Validating the effectiveness of HACCP implementation and assessing the potential gaps between practices and requirements will identify changes needed in USDA food safety and HACCP guidelines and training.

Regulatory agencies can use this data to determine HACCP implementation needs in other segments of the industry.