

Prevalence of *Campylobacter* Contamination in Fresh Chicken Meat and Milk Obtained from Markets in the North-West Province, South Africa

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KEYWORDS *Campylobacter* spp. Meat Contamination. Milk Contamination. Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Mast Colombia Agar (MCA)

ABSTRACT *Campylobacter* species are food-borne enteropathogens that are usually transmitted to humans through the consumption of contaminated food products such as milk, beef and chicken. The aim of the study was to isolate and identify *Campylobacter* species in chicken meat and milk obtained from some supermarkets in the North-west Province, South Africa. Sixteen chicken meat and milk samples were collected from seven regions in the Northwest Province. In chicken meat samples, the prevalence of *C. coli* contamination was 60 percent, 100 percent, 44.4 percent, 100 percent and 80 percent in Mafikeng, Rustenburg, Vryburg region 1, Vryburg region 2 and Dellareyville, respectively. On the other hand, *C. jejuni* was detected at 20 percent, 40 percent and 11.1 percent in Dellareyville, Mafikeng and Vryburg region 1, respectively. Only Vryburg region 1 had 44.4 percent prevalence of *C. lari* among chicken samples. In milk samples, the prevalence of *C. coli* contamination was 86 percent, 65 percent, 75 percent, 67 percent and 41 percent in Rustenburg, Vryburg region 1, Lichtenburg, Zeerust and Vryburg region 2, while 96 percent and 100 percent *C. jejuni* were obtained from Koster and Dellareyville, respectively. *C. jejuni* and *C. coli* were the most frequently (44.4 percent-100 percent) isolated contaminant among chicken samples when compared to *C. lari* (44.4 percent). The result of this study indicated a high prevalence of contamination with *C. jejuni* and *C. coli*, both of which are pathogens. This raises questions of food safety in South African markets.