CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Street food vendors are ubiquitous and a conspicuous presence in most cities. They

are regarded as potential conduits of foodborne disease as a result of the conditions

in which food is prepared, yet in many developing countries, the street food trade

provides an important source of both food and income. It would seem that much of the bias against street foods is unfounded and based on prejudice rather than on

empirical data. This study has shown that street food vendors have adequate

information with regard to the 5 principles of food safety. The knowledge about

clean water does however require further investigation. The attitude of street food

vendors to food safety can also be regarded as attuned to the need to ensure safe

practices in food preparation. Whether this is converted into practice requires further

exploration in future studies, with triangulation of methods. The influence of training

was evident in some street vendors. Trained vendors had more knowledge in some

of the 5 keys principles and had a more positive attitude than the untrained street

food vendors. Age, education level and length of time in the business, were not

factors determining the knowledge, attitude and practices of SFVs.

It can be concluded that these street food vendors practice the 5 key behaviours

required to ensure food safety and that possibly the health risk posed by street foods

may be no greater than the risk posed by foods from other sources. The study

provides the City of Johannesburg with information regarding the knowledge, 77

attitudes and practices of street food vendors as well as information regarding on

who is trained and certified. Potential next steps would be to review their database,

review the requirements for certification and ensure that all street food vendors are

trained and certified. Due to the limitations discussed, these study findings cannot be

generalized.

Recommendations

Current regulations regarding the general hygiene of premises and the transportation

of foods, R918 of 1999 should be reviewed and strengthened to focus on a risk based

approach. Perhaps this should include a clause indicating that certification is

dependant not only on the premises but also that food handlers/owners should

receive proper training, as part of the certification process.

Training conducted should focus on an understanding of the rationale for the

behaviours as knowledge is not always translated into practices or behaviours. This

will require a re-orientation of EHPs on how and what they teach food

handlers/street food vendors. It is recommended that Environmental Health

Practitioners (EHP’s) should make use of the Five Keys to Safer Food behavioural

methodology as a guide for training purposes, on principles of good hygiene

practices.

One of the identified limitations in this study was that, the system of data capturing

regarding trained and certified street food vendors was either not functional or very

difficult to access. It is recommended that the City of Johannesburg regularly update

the database to ensure that it reflects the current situation and not a cumulative total

as is currently the case. Modernization of information capturing and inspection

could be one avenue that should be explored as real-time information and inspection

can be done with internet based software and GPS co-ordinates can be plotted.

The other limitations of the study regarding the lack of exploratory work in this area

should be addressed through further studies in this area.

Further exploratory studies need to be undertaken to understand the reasons for

satisfactory knowledge on cross contamination yet a positive attitude finding towards

cross contamination.

The FAO/WHO should look at developing a standardized tool that could be used to

evaluate the 5 Keys to Safer Foods such that studies such as these can have general

basis of comparison as it was difficult to be able to compare the findings of this

study with other work done in the street food environment.

This study shows that there is a need for additional research in the arena of street

food vendors and the possible risks they may pose with regard to food safety.