

Microbial Safety of Street Vended Foods Sold in Thohoyandou, South Africa

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ABSTRACT Street vended foods (SVFs), if prepared under hygienic and regulated conditions, play a significant role in feeding the urban population with cheap, accessible and nutritious diet. This study investigated the microbial safety of 28 food samples obtained from four different locations in Thohoyandou. Standard microbiological methods were used for enumeration of *Staphylococcus aureus* and Coliforms. Results of the study show that isolated *S. aureus* was $<2.4771 \log_{10} \text{cfu/g}$ in all samples and locations, while there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in total coliform count ($<2.1761 \log_{10} \text{cfu/g}$) among samples and across all locations. Microbial contamination of SVFs using the total plate count method was observed in the food samples except fried potato chips, with marked significant difference ($p < 0.05$) recorded across locations in cereals and meat samples. Majority of SVFs obtained from all locations met the microbiological standard of ready-to-eat foods.