

**Eating out is associated with self-reported food poisoning: a Western Australia population perspective 1998 to 2009.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** To explore factors associated with self-reported food poisoning among Western Australia (WA) adults between 1998 and 2009.

**Design:** Data were pooled from four Nutrition Monitoring Surveys Series which included information on suspected food poisoning among WA adults. Descriptive statistics and multinomial regressions were used to describe factors associated with self-reported food poisoning, food safety knowledge and behaviours.

**Setting:** Population of Western Australia estimated to be 2.5 million in 2009.

**Subjects:** A representative sample of 4494 adults aged between 18 and 64 years.

**Results:** There was no significant change in self-reported food poisoning over time, with about 17% saying they had suspected food poisoning in the last six months. Overall 2.1% said they had confirmed their foodborne illness with a nurse or doctor. People less than 34 years old, those with a university degree, and people who ate meals out on the day prior to the survey (1 meal: OR=1.30 [1.04, 1.62]; 2 meals: OR=2.21 [1.30, 3.76]) were the most likely to report food poisoning. Younger people were also more likely to have their food poisoning confirmed by a health professional. Use of refrigerator thermometers and cool bags for storing food significantly increased between 2004 and 2009.

**Conclusion:** Findings support the inclusion of food safety advice in dietary recommendations. Food safety and handling education and training is recommended for food businesses, particularly the take-away food sector, and for consumers. Because food poisoning is reported more often by younger people, food safety education should begin during childhood.

## INTRODUCTION

Foodborne illness is a common, costly and preventable public health issue. The true incidence of foodborne disease is difficult to determine as people do not always report it or confirm the diagnosis<sup>(1)</sup>. In Australia, it is estimated that there are 5.4 million cases of foodborne illness a year costing AU\$1.2 billion annually<sup>(2)</sup>. In 2009, OzFoodNet, the Australian government foodborne disease surveillance network, reported 1,820 outbreaks of food related gastrointestinal illness, affecting 36,426 people and causing 118 deaths<sup>(2)</sup>.

Food contamination can occur during food preparation or storage and the risk is reduced with correct food safety handling practices. Most bacterial growth can occur between 5°C and 60°C, therefore foods that support the growth of foodborne bacteria should be stored at or below 5°C or, for not food, at or above 60°C<sup>(3)</sup>. Observational studies have found that consumers store food at temperatures higher than 5°C, do not wash their hands during food preparation and have poor knowledge of food safety practices<sup>(4,5)</sup>. Basic food safety knowledge helps consumers protect their food from bacterial contamination and food-associated illness.<sup>(4,5)</sup> As well as increasing awareness of the risks of food borne illness, consumer food safety education should include information about temperature control, correct home food preparation practices and cross-contamination (including refrigeration cleaning)<sup>(5,6)</sup>. In Australia, community education programs have encouraged consumers to keep their domestic refrigerators at a maximum temperature of 4°C. Restaurants, cafeterias and other commercial settings are often implicated in foodborne disease outbreaks, with only 20 to 40% of food borne illness accounted for by foods eaten at home in Australia<sup>(1)</sup>. This may be due in part to under-reporting of foodborne illness at home. With the increasing trend for eating foods away from home, it is important to monitor foodborne illness and educate the general public and those involved in the food service sector regarding food safety practices<sup>(7)</sup>.

The National Health and Medical Research Council's Dietary Guidelines advise people to "Care for your food; prepare and store it safely"<sup>(3)</sup>. The main causes of foodborne illness in Australia are inadequate cooking; improper holding temperatures; contaminated equipment and/or food storage and preparation areas; contaminated or unsafe raw foods; allowing raw foods to make direct contact with ready-to-eat foods; and poor personal hygiene of food handlers<sup>(8,9)</sup>. Dietary guidelines recommend that we eat more fresh foods and limit consumption of processed foods high in fat, added sugar and salt<sup>(3)</sup>. Some of the foods that consumers are recommended to eat more of are situated within the higher food safety risk foods, for example, perishable foods such as fruit, vegetables, dairy and lean meats, fish, and chicken. Education efforts to improve food safety should focus on personal and kitchen hygiene, refrigeration temperatures, adequate cooking and

avoiding cross-contamination<sup>(10)</sup>. Government's response to protecting public health and safety relating to food safety is predominately through legislation focused at food safety practices or deceptive conduct of food businesses. In addition to this, regulatory agencies have sought to educate consumers about safe food handling<sup>(10)</sup>. The Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Act 1991, sets out the FSANZ's objectives for the development of food standards. In descending order they are to: protect public health and safety; provide adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices; and to prevent misleading or deceptive conduct of food businesses. Consumer education in Australia is delivered through the FSANZ website, and state and local governments<sup>(11)</sup>. There is also an annual National Food Safety Awareness Week in Australia which provides a focus for food safety messages.

Concern about foodborne illness has been growing over the past few decades, particularly for vulnerable groups for example elderly people<sup>(12,13)</sup> and younger adults who have been shown to have poor food handling practices<sup>(12)</sup>. Most research regarding food safety and handling practices and knowledge in Australia and New Zealand have focused on hand washing behavior<sup>(14-17)</sup>

There is limited information available on the Western Australian populations' knowledge regarding food safety. Understanding and monitoring consumer food safety knowledge and attitudes is useful when developing interventions or actions to improve diet and at the same time reduce the incidence of foodborne illness.

The Health Department of Western Australia's Nutrition Monitor Survey Series (NMSS) has monitored adult's self-reported food poisoning incidence, food safety knowledge, and food purchasing and preparation behaviours since 1998. The NMSS also collects information on the purchase of meals away from home on the day prior to the survey. This paper explores community trends in self-reported food poisoning and food safety knowledge and behaviours and associated factors among Western Australia adults between 1998 and 2009.

## **EXPERIMENTAL METHODS**

This study was conducted according to the guidelines laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki and all procedures involving human subjects/patients were approved by the Department of Health's Ethics Committee. Verbal informed consent was obtained from all subjects. Verbal consent was witnessed and formally recorded by the telephone interviewers.

### **Surveys**

The data used for this analysis were a component of the Western Australia Department of Health's statewide surveys, the Nutrition Monitor Survey Series (NMSS). Food safety questions were asked using computer assisted telephone interviews of Western Australian adults aged 18 to 64 years, conducted July to August 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2009. The 1995 sample was stratified by area and

the 1998, 2001 and 2004 samples were quota sampled by gender and area. The telephone numbers were selected randomly by a computer generated random digit dialing program. In 2009, the sample was randomly drawn from the 2008 Electronic White Pages for Western Australia and stratified according to area of residence. All sample households with an address were sent a primary approach letter explaining the purpose the survey, how the sample was selected, who would be asked to do the survey and about how long it would take. Every household in the initial sample was called and asked if someone aged 18-64 years was resident and if so, which one had the most recent birthday. No substitutes were accepted.

### **Measures**

Respondents were asked two food poisoning questions, six about food handling and preparation, and one question about the purchase of meals to be eaten away from home foods on the day prior to the survey. The foodborne illness questions were: “In the last 6 months have you experienced vomiting and/or diarrhea, which you suspect, may have been food poisoning?” and then, “Was the food poisoning positively identified by a doctor or nurse?” The food handling questions were: “How often do you put your cold or frozen food in an “Esky” (a brand name for ice box cooler) to transport it from the shops to home?”; “What do you think the maximum temperature a fridge should operate at?”; “Do you have a thermometer in your main refrigerator at home?”; and “Do you have any responsibility for doing the food shopping[choosing and preparing meals] in your household?”.

The number of meals eaten out was derived from the question "Which meal did you buy from a restaurant, takeaway, lunch bar, canteen, or other prepared food outlet yesterday?"(Breakfast, lunch, evening meal, none).

Demographic information collected included age, gender, income, education level paid employment, and country of birth.

### **Statistical analysis**

The data were collected and weighted to be representative of the WA population. Data for all the years were pooled and weighted to account for sample design and post adjusted for age, sex and geographic area to a single standard population to allow for comparison over time. The standard population used was the 2006 Estimated Resident Population of Western Australia as it was the most recent census year.<sup>(18)</sup> Survey module of STATA software version 12.0 (StataCorp LP, College Station, TX) was used for all analyses. Multiple regression analysis explored associations of suspected food poisoning with year of survey, demographic characteristics (age, gender,

residential area, education level, household income, employment status, country of birth), take-away meal consumption, and food preparation and purchasing responsibility. User-defined simplest models were reported: variable with  $p$  value  $< .05$  were retained in the model except for “survey year” was forced into the final models.

## RESULTS

A total of 4494 adults aged 18 to 64 participated in the survey between 1998 and 2009. Demographics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

An average of 18% of the population reported suspected food poisoning in the six months prior to the survey, ranging from 15% to 19% across the survey years however, the differences were not statistically significant ( $p=.48$ ), see Table 2. Younger adults aged 18 to 34 years were significantly more likely than those over 35 years to report suspected food poisoning in 2009 compared to 2001. The proportion of suspected food poisoning cases that were confirmed by a doctor or a nurse was about two percent overall and only 10.5% of those who said they had suspected food poisoning.

Significantly more people reported using an ice box cooler when transporting cold or frozen food in 2009 (27%) than in 1998 (9%) or 2001 (8%) ( $p<.001$ ). Respondents were also significantly more likely to report having a thermometer in their main fridge in 2009 (30%) than in 1998 (11%) or 2001 (12%) ( $p=.006$ ).

Although about 60% of respondents said they knew the maximum temperature that a refrigerator should operate at, only a third of those who said they knew the temperature gave the correct temperature of 4°C, and this did not change over time. The correct temperature was specified as 4°C (based on the 40°F, the recommended home refrigerator temperature)<sup>(19)</sup>. See Figure 1 for the range of temperatures.

Most people said they had some responsibility (sole or shared) for food shopping, increasing from 82% in 1998 to 88% in 2009 ( $p=.02$ ). Similarly, most people, 90%, had some responsibility for meal preparation, with more people sharing responsibility than having sole responsibility for preparing meals ( $p=.009$ ). There was no significant difference over time in the proportion of people buying take-away meals on the day prior to the survey ( $p=.79$ ).

Logistic regression modeling found no significant difference in the prevalence of self-reported suspected food poisoning (in six months prior the survey) from 1998 to 2009. People less than 35 years old, those with a university education (OR=1.29, 95% CI [1.05, 1.58]) and those who had purchased take-away meal/s on the day prior to the survey (1 meal: OR=1.32 [1.06, 1.64]; 2 meals: OR=2.37 [1.40, 4.03]) were significantly more likely to say they had suspected food poisoning. People who were younger were significantly more likely to report that their food poisoning was confirmed by a doctor or nurse (18-24 years: OR=4.25 [1.46, 12.36]; 24-34 years: OR=3.81 [1.42,

10.24]) with no difference across survey years. Those people living in rural Western Australia were significantly less likely to report either suspected or confirmed food poisoning.

Women were 2.3 times as likely than men to say they knew the maximum temperature for a refrigerator (OR=2.34 [1.71, 3.21]), as were people with a university education (OR=1.88 [1.35,2.63]), and those currently in paid employment (OR=1.51 [1.06,2.13]). However, being male (OR=1.55 [1.10, 2.18]) was the only significant predictor for giving a correct answer for the maximum refrigerator temperature.

In 2009, people were 3.4 times as likely to report having a thermometer in their main fridge than they were in 1998 (OR=3.40 [2.27,5.10]).

## **DISCUSSION**

Overall, there has been no significant increase in the incidence of self-reported suspected food poisoning since 1998 in Western Australia. Almost one in five people said they had suspected food poisoning in the six months prior to the survey, and of these, only 10 to 17% had confirmed their illness with a health professional. OzFoodNet estimated that 25% of the population had suspected food poisoning in 2009<sup>(2)</sup>, which is consistent with our finding of 17% of the population reporting suspected food poisoning in six months reported in this study.

Reliance on confirmed cases of food poisoning underestimates the real incidence and cost of food poisoning for the community. In 2009, the OzFoodNet reported that only 0.12% food poisoning were confirmed cases annually and reporting the specific micro-organism<sup>(2)</sup> compared to the 2.0% in this study, where the confirmation is by a nurse or doctor.

Adults aged less than 34 years were significantly more likely to report suspected food poisoning in the last six months. These findings are consistent with previous studies by the Food and Drug Administration in the US who found that people 18 to 39 years were more likely than other age groups to believe that they had experienced a food borne illness<sup>(20)</sup>. They are also the group most likely to report risky food handling and consumption behaviours<sup>(21)</sup>.

Those people who ate take away meals twice on the day before the survey were almost three times as likely than those who had none to have had suspected food poisoning in the last six months. The who ate only one fast food meal the day before were 1.3 times as likely to get foodborne illness compared to those who ate none. Previous research has found that restaurants, cafeterias and other commercial setting are frequently implicated in reported foodborne disease outbreaks while illness from food eaten in the home accounts for 20-40% of foodborne infection<sup>(1)</sup>. These results support previous US findings suggesting an urgent need to focus on preventing foodborne disease transmission within the food service industry<sup>(22)</sup>.

Those people living in rural Western Australia were significantly less likely to report either suspected or confirmed food poisoning. This may be because 75% of the population resides in the

metropolitan area in WA, however, the reason for this is unknown and warrants further investigation.

These results highlight the need for further research into the reason that those who eat meals away from home suffer greater foodborne illness. This association could be due to food contamination or improper handling at the restaurant or after when the consumer has ‘taken the food away’, highlighting the need for both food service food safety training and consumer education regarding reheating or storing take-away foods.

The findings of this survey highlight the need for community-wide food safety education. Almost everyone in the population has some responsibility for the purchasing or preparation of food for their household. As young people appear to suffer a disproportionate amount of foodborne illness there may be some benefit in targeting food safety education to adolescents and young adults. OzFoodNet reports that travelers acquiring foodborne illness overseas represent a proportion of reported foodborne in Australia<sup>(2)</sup>.

About a third of Western Australian adults reported eating meals away from home on the day prior to the survey. In line with findings of a review of food contamination in ready-to-eat products in retail and food service environments<sup>(7)</sup>, food safety education and training to retail and food service managers and food handlers is important to reinforce the need for safe food handling and preparation practices within the food service sector.

Although many people said they knew the maximum refrigerator temperature, less than half gave the correct value, highlighting the ongoing need to educate consumers about food safety. These findings are consistent with previous research which found that up to 95% of consumers did not know correct refrigeration temperatures and surveys reporting actual temperature up to 70% exceeded recommended ranges<sup>(1)</sup>. It is important that the public continue to be educated regarding temperature control of food prepared at home<sup>(6)</sup> as well as personal hygiene, food preparation and storage and avoiding cross contamination<sup>(23)</sup>. Manufacturing changes are likely to account increased use of refrigerator thermometers as newer models in Australia come with inbuilt thermometers, so the consumer does not have to take action to purchase one. This simple industry innovation has increased the potential for safer food. The increased availability of cold storage bags available for purchase at grocery stores and specialty food stores may also account for increase use seen in this survey.

This cross-sectional survey provides useful insights into changes in population perceptions of suspected food poisoning, food safety and handling knowledge and behaviours over time and within particular socio-demographic groups but as with all cross sectional studies, no causality can be attributed to results. The main limitation of this study is the way in which the data were collected changed over time (Random digit dialling with and without matching to known operational

numbers prior to 2009 and Electronic White Pages in 2009). This affected the response rates which were lower in years when Random Digit Dialling was done without any matching to known operational numbers. The quota sampling in years prior to 2009 also contributed to difficulties in making the population groups comparable. However, weighting as described in the methods section was used to adjust for these sampling differences. Mobile phones were not included in the sample frames prior to 2009, however in 2004, the time of the previous survey, Australia still relied predominantly on land lines, so bias, if any exists, should be minimal.

Future research is needed to identify the specific attitudes and knowledge limiting safe food handling practices by consumers and food industry, particularly those people operating food service businesses. It would be useful to explore food safety knowledge, practices and food poisoning experiences among young adults to help develop effective health promotion interventions. This study again highlighted the low reporting and confirming of suspected food poisoning. Exploring the barriers to reporting food poisoning is important encourage those suffering foodborne illness to report their case.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Findings support the inclusion of food safety advice in dietary guidelines. Food safety and handling education and training is recommended for both food businesses, particularly those preparing meals eaten away from home and for consumers. Because the incidence of food poisoning is significantly higher in younger people, food safety education should begin during childhood.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **Ethics approval**

Human Research Ethics Committee Department of Health in Western Australia, DOHWA HREC, Project number 2011/65 Research Ethics, Curtin University SPH - 08 - 2012

## **Author contribution**

CMP: was involved in managing and developing the NMSS survey instruments and worked with the Department of Health in Western Australia to oversee the surveys being conducted.

RM: Conducted the statistical analysis and drafted the interpretation of results for the paper.

CMP and RM: wrote the first draft of the paper

SW, JD, CWB: contributed to writing the manuscript and agree with manuscript results and conclusions

**Table 1 Sample demographics of Nutrition Monitoring Survey Series: Western Australia, 1998-2009**

	1998 n=1004	2001 n=1004	2004 n=1202	2009 n=1284	Total * n=4494 %
Sex					
Female	502	502	601	830	49.2
Male	502	502	601	454	50.8
Age group (years)					
18-24	110	118	103	71	15.8
25-34	210	245	232	180	21.5
35-44	305	296	333	340	23.6
45-54	234	212	297	356	22.2
55-64	145	133	237	337	16.9
Area of residence					
Metropolitan	751	754	601	965	77.9
Remote areas	63	62	150	29	3.9
Rural areas	190	188	451	290	18.2
Education					
Less than high school	336	303	330	221	28.2
High school	237	265	257	178	25.3
Trade/Certificate/Diploma	95	77	177	481	11.2
University degree	336	344	435	399	34.8
Missing	0	15	3	5	0.5
Household income (Australian dollars)					
≤60,000	603	558	603	349	54.5
>60,000	305	340	560	814	36.9
Missing	96	106	39	121	8.7
Employment					
Not in paid employment	263	278	285	364	26.3
Currently in paid employment	741	726	917	920	73.7
County of birth					
Australia	665	668	868	867	67.4
Non-Australian	339	336	334	416	32.6
Missing	0	0	0	1	0

\* Percentage were weight for probability of sample selection and adjusted by age, sex and geographic area to the 2006 Estimated Resident Population of Western Australia.

**Table 2 Proportion of adults reporting food poisoning (suspected and confirmed), take-away meal consumption, food safety knowledge and food preparation responsibility, 1998-2009, Western Australia \***

	1998 % [95% CI]	2001 % [95% CI]	2004 % [95% CI]	2009 % [95% CI]	<i>p</i> value
<i>Food poisoning</i>					
Suspected in last 6 months ( <i>n</i> =4493)	18.3 [15.9,20.9]	18.8 [16.4,21.4]	16.8 [14.4,19.5]	15.0 [12.9,17.3]	.48
Confirmed by a doctor or nurse ( <i>n</i> =4493)	2.1 [1.4,3.3]	2.3 [1.5,3.5]	2.0 [1.2,3.3]	2.6 [1.7,3.9]	.90
If yes, confirmed by a doctor or nurse ( <i>n</i> =748)	10.4 [6.8,15.7]	10.8 [7.1,16.0]	10.2 [6.4,16.0]	17.3 [11.9,24.6]	.88
<i>Esky usage</i> ( <i>n</i> =2990)					
Always	5.2 [3.9,6.9]	4.9 [3.7,6.6]	-	17.3 [15.0,19.8]	<.001
Usually/most time	3.9 [2.7,5.5]	3.1 [2.1,4.5]	-	9.6 [7.6,12.0]	
Occasionally	12.3 [10.1,14.8]	10.2 [8.3,12.4]	-	16.4 [14.1,18.9]	
Never	78.6 [75.7,81.3]	81.8 [79.1,84.2]	-	56.8 [53.5,60.0]	
<i>Maximum fridge temperature</i> ( <i>n</i> =3292)					
Said they knew	59.6 [56.5,62.7]	62.1 [59.0,65.1]	-	62 [58.8,65.0]	.27
Said they did not know	40.4 [37.3,43.5]	37.9 [34.9,41.0]	-	38 [35.0,41.2]	
<i>Temperature given</i> ( <i>n</i> =2008)					
Not correct	65.5 [61.4,69.3]	65.9 [62.0,69.7]	-	67.1 [63.1,70.8]	.87
Correct (4 Celsius)	34.5 [30.7,38.6]	34.1 [30.3,38.0]	-	32.9 [29.2,36.9]	
<i>Thermometer in main fridge</i> ( <i>n</i> =3262)					
No	88.9 [86.7,90.8]	87.3 [85.0,89.3]	-	70.3 [67.2,73.3]	.006
Yes	10.9 [9.1,13.1]	12.4 [10.4,14.7]	-	29.7 [26.7,32.8]	
No fridge	0.2 [0.0,0.6]	0.3 [0.1,0.9]	-	0	
<i>Responsibility for food shopping</i> ( <i>n</i> =4494)					
No	17.9 [15.5,20.4]	13.3 [11.2,15.6]	15.9 [13.7,18.5]	11.9 [9.7,14.5]	.02
Sole responsibility	45.9 [42.9,49.0]	51.7 [48.6,54.8]	46.2 [43.1,49.3]	45.5 [42.3,48.7]	
Shared responsibility	36.2 [33.2,39.3]	35.0 [32.1,38.1]	37.9 [34.8,41.0]	42.6 [39.5,45.8]	
<i>Responsibility for meal preparation</i> ( <i>n</i> =4494)					
No	11.2 [9.3,13.4]	9.9 [8.1,11.9]	11.4 [9.5,13.7]	9.3 [7.5,11.6]	.009
Sole responsibility	42.6 [39.6,45.6]	50.8 [47.7,53.9]	44.4 [41.3,47.5]	40.8 [37.8,44.0]	
Shared responsibility	46.2 [43.1,49.3]	39.4 [36.3,42.5]	44.2 [41.0,47.4]	49.9 [46.7,53.0]	
<i>Meals eaten out yesterday</i> ( <i>n</i> =4485)					
					.79

No	68.3 [65.3,71.2]	69.9 [66.9,72.7]	69.7 [66.6,72.7]	70.2 [67.2,73.1]
1 meal	28.8 [26.0,31.7]	27.8 [25.0,30.7]	27.3 [24.4,30.3]	28.4 [25.6,31.5]
2 meals	2.9 [2.0,4.3]	2.3 [1.5,3.5]	3.0 [2.0,4.5]	1.3 [0.8,2.2]

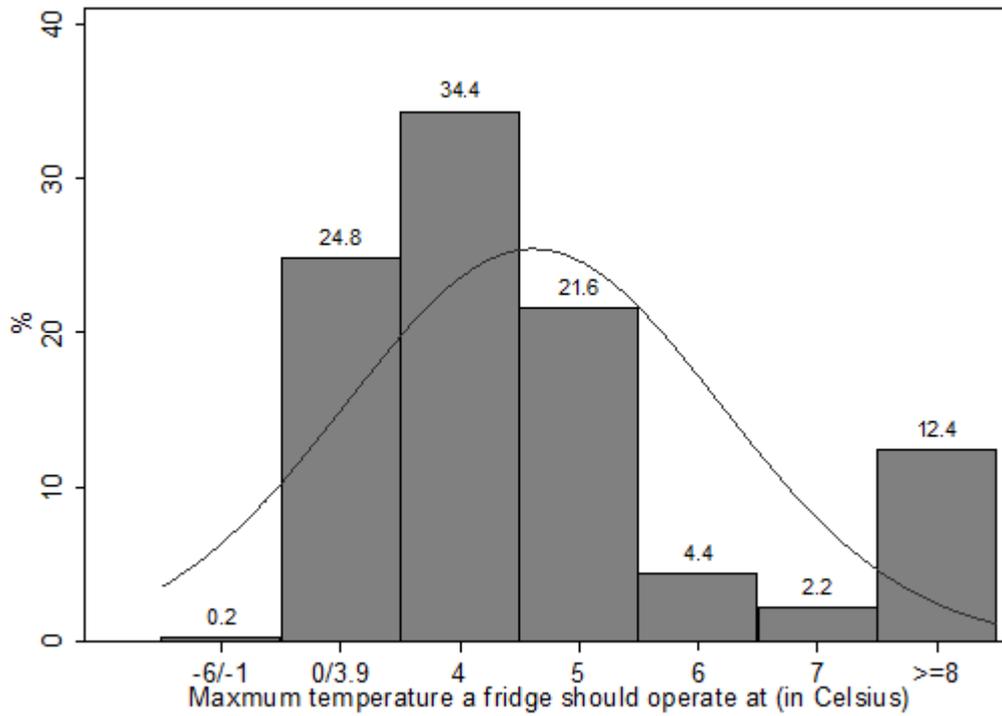
\* Estimates were weighted for probability of sample selection and adjusted by age, sex and geographic area to a standard population using the 2006 Estimated Resident Population of Western Australia. *p* values were derived from survey design-based Pearson chi-square test.

**Table 3 Factors associated with self-reported suspected and/or confirmed food poisoning, food safety knowledge, 1998-2009, Western Australia**

	<b>Suspected food poisoning in last six months</b> (n=4461)	<b>Food poisoning confirmed by a doctor or nurse</b> (n=4461)	<b>Said they knew the maximum refrigerator temperature</b> (n=3272) <sup>a</sup>	<b>Gave correct refrigerator temperature</b> (n=3272) <sup>a</sup>	<b>Have a fridge thermometer</b> (n=3262) <sup>a</sup>
	OR [95% CI]	OR [95% CI]	OR [95% CI]	OR [95% CI]	OR [95% CI]
<b>Year of survey</b> (1998 ref (OR=1.00))					
2001	1.01 [0.80,1.28]	0.99 [0.52,1.87]	1.12 [0.82,1.53]	1.03 [0.73,1.47]	1.18 [0.75,1.84]
2004	0.91 [0.71,1.17]	0.97 [0.49,1.92]	na	na	na
2009	0.86 [0.67,1.10]	1.46 [0.78,2.72]	1.28 [0.94,1.75]	1.05 [0.74,1.51]	3.40 [2.27,5.10]***
<b>Age (years)</b> (55-64yrs ref (OR=1.00))					
18-24	2.01 [1.36,2.97]***	4.25 [1.46,12.36]**	-	-	-
25-34	2.01 [1.44,2.82]***	3.81 [1.42,10.24]**	-	-	-
35-44	1.21 [0.87,1.69]	1.76 [0.65,4.79]	-	-	-
45-54	1.09 [0.77,1.56]	0.73 [0.19,2.75]	-	-	-
<b>Sex</b> (Male ref (OR=1.00))					
Female	-	-	2.34 [1.71,3.21]***	1.55 [1.10, 2.18]*	-
<b>Education</b> (less than University Degree ref (OR=1.00))					
University Degree	1.29 [1.05,1.58]*	-	1.88 [1.35,2.63]***	-	-
<b>Paid employment</b> (Not employed ref (OR=1.00))					
In Paid employment	-	-	1.51 [1.06,2.13]*	-	-
<b>Residential area</b> (Metropolitan ref(OR=1.00))					
Remote	0.89 [0.63,1.26]	0.88 [0.38,2.02]	-	-	-
Rural	0.67 [0.53,0.86]***	0.50 [0.25,1.00]*	-	-	-
<b>Meals eaten out yesterday</b> (None ref (OR=1))					
One meal	1.32 [1.06,1.64]*	-	-	-	-
Two meals	2.37 [1.40,4.03]***	-	-	-	-

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$  <sup>a</sup>Data not available for 2004. Results are derived from logistic regressions using survey module and user-defined simplest model were reported: only variables with p value  $< .05$  were retained and reported, except for survey year which was forced into the final model. The full model included demographics (sex, age group, education (less than university degree to those with university degree) ,

income, employment status, country of birth) and associated dietary behaviours (food shopping and preparation responsibility, purchase of meals away from home on day prior to the survey). “ref”: reference group; ‘na’: data not available.



**Figure 1 Reported maximum temperature a fridge should operate at, among Western Australian adults aged 18 to 64 years who said they knew the temperature, 1998, 2001 and 2009, n=2008.**

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