

Perspective from Direct Consumer Communication on Inherent Contaminants

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Consumer Reports

**JIFSAN-CFS3 Advisory Council Virtual Annual Symposium
Understanding of the Impact of Arsenic, Cadmium, and Lead Across
the Food Supply**

Who is Consumer Reports?

Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world

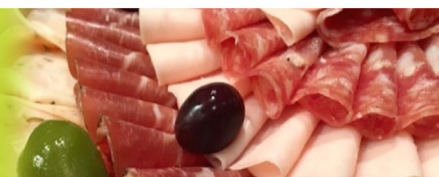
CR's science-based food safety research and testing advances our mission by:

- Testing where there is little to no testing being performed.
- Providing information to consumers on the food safety system.
- Requiring accountability of:
 - Food producers
 - Governments
 - Label claims

Recent Studies

Study of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Turkey Meat Samples from Independent, Urban Delis Provides a Critical Triangulation Point for a Multistate Outbreak Investigation

P1-27 Sana Mujahid and James Rogers
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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Research suggests that small and independent delis are less likely to follow proper sanitation procedures, including slicer inspection, which could lead to a higher likelihood of these delis being a reservoir for *Listeria monocytogenes* growth and cross-contamination.

Purpose: To determine the incidence of *L. monocytogenes* in counter-sliced turkey deli meat obtained from independent delis in an urban city.

Methods: Turkey deli meat, counter-sliced or ate, was collected from 133 delis in an urban area mostly from independent establishments. The samples were analyzed for *L. monocytogenes* using USDA MLG methodology for isolation and confirmation. The isolation media for delis included using the city's restaurant inspection and grading system. The majority of delis had an in- or top-gate, but did not have food safety violations in their entire record.

Results: Two samples, from separate delis, were confirmed positive for *L. monocytogenes* (1.5%). Analysis of the genomic sequences of one of the samples revealed a close match to a cluster of 6 clinical listeriosis cases which was part of an ongoing multi-state outbreak spanning 4 different states. The second sample matched a clinical case in a neighboring state. Both samples were obtained from delis that did not have the top inspection grade.

Significance: Although a member of an urban area, this study is the first report of the current incidence of *L. monocytogenes* on counter-sliced deli meat from independent establishments. This study suggests that these delis can potentially serve as sources of *L. monocytogenes* contamination that is attributable to downstream foodborne listeriosis. Information provided by city inspection and grading systems, in addition to the retail grade, may serve as a tool to identify delis with potential *L. monocytogenes* contamination issues and serve as a basis for product and environment sampling by public health authorities.

RESULTS

- Two samples, from separate delis, were confirmed positive for *L. monocytogenes* (1.5%) (Figure 2). Analysis of the genomic sequences of one of the samples revealed a close match to a cluster of 6 clinical listeriosis cases in the NCBI genome database (initially, which was part of an ongoing multi-state outbreak spanning 4 different states (Figure 3 and 4). As of July 16, 2019, the number of clinical case matches in the NCBI database had increased to 11 (Figure 2). The second sample matched a clinical case in a neighboring state. Both samples were obtained from delis that did not have the top inspection grade.
- Water Activity of the samples tested ranged from 0.94 – 0.99, and pH ranged from 5.8 – 6.4. Average Aerobic Plate Counts ranged from <10 CFU/g – 7.57 log CFU/g.

Figure 2: Consumer Reports' counter-sliced turkey meat samples from 2 of the 133 delis sampled were confirmed positive for *L. monocytogenes* and match clinical cases in the NCBI genome database.



Figure 3: Consumer Reports' sample from New York City matched the outbreak strain of *L. monocytogenes*, which infected 8 people in 4 states, as of April 15, 2019.

Leafy Greens With *Listeria* Sold at Major Supermarkets

Consumer Reports found the bacteria in prewashed and unbagged products. Here's how to stay safe when eating greens.

By Trisha Calvo
 July 26, 2019



A lab technician preparing samples in Consumer Reports' recent tests of leafy greens.

Arsenic and Lead Are in Your Fruit Juice: What You Need to Know

CR finds concerning levels of heavy metals in almost half of tested juices. Here's how to protect yourself and your family.

By Jesse Hirsch
 Last updated: January 30, 2019

193 SHARES



ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS PHILPOT

Exploring Effective Messaging Strategies for Changing Consumer Food Behaviors

Behavior Change Strategies in the Field

Jeff Niederdeppe, Cornell University, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Communication, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

1. Clear messages*, repeated often, through multiple channels, from diverse sources, over a long period of time
2. Think about the outcome you want to achieve and work backwards

* As simple as possible, but recognizing that sometimes complexity is essential

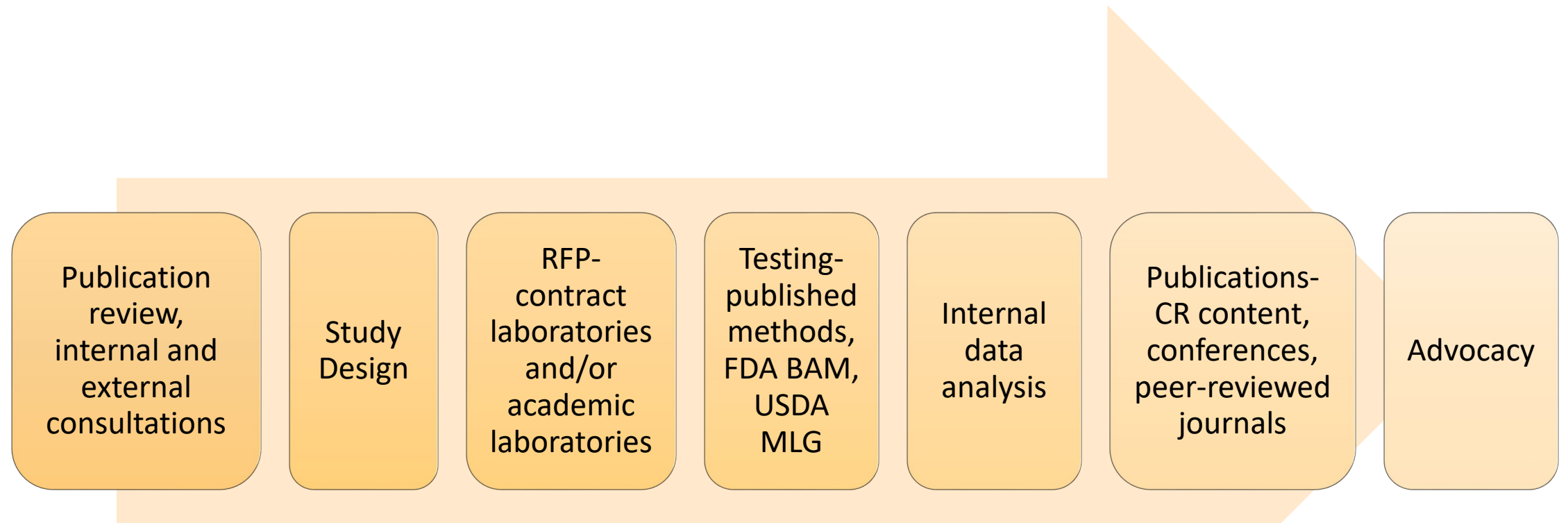
Population distribution in the United States in 2019, by generation

Generation	Birth Range	Percentage
The Greatest Generation	before 1928	.52%
The Silent Generation	1924-1945	6.36%
The Baby Boomer Generation	1946-1964	21.19%
Generation X	1965-1980	19.85%
The Millennial Generation	1981-1996	21.97%
Generation Z	1997-2012	20.46%

CR Food Safety Reporting

- Selection of samples is based on market analysis data of the most purchased brands + samples of importance + location of sales
 - Spices from bodegas, African and Middle Eastern stores
- Identification of brands, including pictures of the products in the story
- Recommendations based on testing results of what products to consider to purchase/avoid/reduce

A Risk-Based Approach to Select and Design Studies on Microbial and Chemical Food Safety Hazards



The Consumer Reports Model

- The W's and the H's
 - What did we test?
 - Why did we test?
 - How did we test?
 - What did we find?
 - What does it mean to you as a consumer/mom and dads/etc?
 - What can you do?
 - How can you get involved?

CR Food Safety Reporting

- General consumption advice
- If manufacturers reformulate and retest, so will we, if informed
 - Earth's Best Organic Infant Rice Cereal, Gerber's Single-Grain Rice Baby Cereal and Organic Single-Grain Rice Baby Cereal
- Alternatives to products that tested high
 - Grow your own spices
 - Substitutions

Report Results Using Graphics



BASIL



Simply Organic Basil



365 Whole Foods Market Basil



Great Value (Walmart) Basil Leave



McCormick Culinary Ground Basil (Albahaca Molida)



Sausage Maker Ground Basil



Litehouse Freeze Dried Basil



Morton & Bassett Basil*



Spice Islands Sweet Basil



What can Parents Do?

- Limit the amount of infant rice cereal your child eats.
- Choose the right rice.
- Rethink rice prep.
- Limit packaged snacks.
- Seek out whole foods low in heavy metals.
- Be wary of fruit juice.

What can Parents Do?

- Go easy on the chocolate.
- Pick the right fish.
- Take a pass on protein powders.
- Check your water.
- Eat a broad array of healthful whole foods.

What Manufacturers Should Do

- Children's food manufacturers don't have to wait for the FDA before they reduce the heavy metal content of their products.
 - Self-regulate
- One step they can take is to source their ingredients from areas that are less likely to be contaminated.
 - Usually based on our testing data of multiple brands

How Can I Get Involved?

<https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/issue/food/>

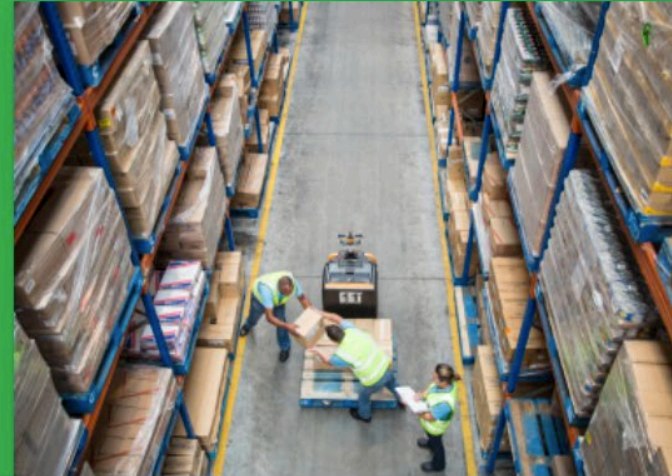
Get Involved



Be in the Know

Join our Consumer Impact Newsletter list to stay on top of the issues that matter most to consumers.

[Sign up now](#)



Here's What We're Working On

Download our Consumer Agenda to learn more about the issues we're working on today.

[Download](#)

Frame Your Food Safety Message on Multiple Levels



Facebook
Twitter
LinkedIn
Instagram
Pinterest
TikTok

CR Video for the web/~~Consumer 101 TV Show~~

Testing Data
Initial Analysis
Content

General Audience
Magazine and Website

Interviews on national TV, Radio

Social Media

Partnerships

Scientific
Presentations and
Publications

↓
“If you want additional information”
Deeper Dive via links to more information



- The magazine readership skews Older (along with Facebook)
- Cannot get too “science-y”
- Must write at the appropriate level
- Accept that not all messaging will have broad audience appeal
 - Baby Food appealing to parents only?

CR Social

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ConsumerReports/>

- Facebook Live

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ConsumerReports>

- Twitter Chats

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/consumerreports/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/consumerreports/>

TikTok: <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMJA254W/>

External Partnerships

Baby-Led Weaning Made Easy with Katie Ferraro - 208. Heavy Metals in Baby Food
<https://blwpodcast.com/episodes/208>

How do we Protect our Children from Lead and other Heavy Metals in Food? – Pure Earth Expert Panel Discussion – Twitter Spaces - <https://www.pureearth.org/twitter-spaces-discussion/>

Extends the reach of the results and messaging to areas we normally do not have access to

Choose Your Tools Wisely

More and more, people will not pay for Television

- Streaming is king
- “As far as TV goes, we just wouldn’t use it,”

Americans now check their phones 96 times a day –

- Once every 10 minutes,
- It has increased over time and for some, is the primary source of information
- Be ready to address inaccurate information
- Your messaging has to fit the platform
- Consider apps, automatic pushes, for food safety messaging

Choose Your Tools Wisely

Use the right person(s) for engagement

- Not every CEO is camera or microphone-ready
- Some communities are more receptive to messaging from people that look like them

Communication has become "Tribal"

Mommy Bloggers

- Get their information on what products to or not to buy via Facebook and blogging platforms
- The moms are more likely to listen to other moms than to public service announcements
- These groups form, dissolve, and can reform spontaneously



Source: QA magazine, Cover Story, February 2019
<https://www.qualityassurancemag.com/article/is-consumer-reports-testing-your-foods-safety/>