Abstract

Background & aim: Many disease outbreaks of food origin are caused by foods prepared in Food Service and Nutrition Units of hospitals, affecting hospitalized patients who, in most cases, are immunocompromised and therefore at a higher risk of severe worsening of their clinical status. The aim of this study was to determine the variations in temperature and the time-temperature factor of hospital diets. Methods: The time and temperature for the preparation of 4 diets of modified consistency were determined on 5 nonconsecutive days in a hospital Diet and Nutrition Unit at the end of preparation and during the maintenance period, portioning and distribution at 3 sites, i.e., the first, the middle and the last to receive the diets. Results and discussion: All foods reached an adequate temperature at the end of cooking, but temperature varied significantly from the maintenance period to the final distribution, characterizing critical periods for microorganism proliferation. During holding, temperatures that presented a risk were reached by 16.7% of the meats and 59% of the salads of the general diet, by 16.7% of the garnishes in the bland diet and by 20% of the meats and garnishes in the viscous diet. The same occurred at the end of distribution for 100% of the hot samples and of the salads and for 61% of the desserts. None of the preparations remained at risk temperature for a time exceeding that established by law. Conclusion: The exposure to inadequate temperature did not last long enough to pose risks to the patient.

Keywords

Time-temperature factor, Critical control points, Hospital diets.