

INCIDENCE OF LISTERIA SPECIES IN SOME DAIRY PRODUCTS IN BENI-SUEF GOVERNORATE

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to investigate the prevalence of *Listeria spp.* in some dairy products. A total of 240 samples of fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese, Kareish cheese, Talaga cheese and yoghurt (40 of each) were collected randomly from different supermarkets, retail outlets and other markets outlets in Beni-Suef Governorate, Egypt. Out of 240 samples, 24(10%) were positive for *Listeria species*. The occurrence of *Listeria spp.* in fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese and Kareish cheese was 6(15%), 8 (20%), 5 (12.5%) and 5(12.5%) respectively, while *Listeria species* couldn't be detected in any of Talaga cheese and yoghurt samples. The most prevalent species was *L.grayii* (45.83%), followed by *L.monocytogenes* (33.33%), and *L.welshimeri* (12.51%) and *L. innocua* 2(8.33%). All 8 *L.monocytogenes* isolates showed the presence of the hly A gene suggesting the possibility of danger of food borne listeriosis among dairy products consumers. In conclusion, the results of this study emphasize the need for applying more strict hygienic control measures especially during processing, storage and marketing of dairy products.

Key words: *Listeria spp.*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, Dairy products, PCR assay.

INTRODUCTION

Milk and dairy products, because of their nutritional value, are suitable for development of microorganisms including pathogenic bacteria as *Listeria species* (Kasalica *et al.*, 2011; El Marnissi *et al.*, 2013 and Abd El Tawab *et al.*, 2015).

Listeria species are ubiquitous bacteria, well adapted in the environment and can be isolated from soil, vegetables and natural waters as well as from healthy animal and man (Roberts and Weidmann, 2003; Cocolin *et al.*, 2005 and Liu 2008). In this manner contaminate milk and production plants (Leite *et al.*, 2006). Among the species of the genus *Listeria*, only *L. monocytogenes* is considered as one of the most significant food borne pathogen that induces serious and potentially life threatening illness known as listeriosis in humans and animals (Ryser and Marth, 2007 and Rahimi *et al.*, 2012). However occasional human infection due to *L.ivanovii* and *L.seeligeri* has also been reported (Gilot and Content 2002).

Listeriosis has been recognized as one of the serious emerging bacterial zoonotic diseases. Several outbreaks and sporadic cases of listeriosis primarily associated with consumption of contaminated milk, soft or semi soft cheeses, uncooked and ready to eat foods, unwashed raw vegetables and fruits (Oliver *et al.*, 2005; Swaminathan and Gerner-Smidt, 2007; Rahimi *et al.*, 2010; Kevenk and Gulel, 2016).

Listeriosis can be life-threatening for newborns, elderly and immuno – compromised individuals (McLauchlin *et al.*, 2004 and Rahimi *et al.*, 2012). It may be ranged from non invasive febrile gastroenteritis or influenza like symptoms to persons with no predisposing conditions (Aureli *et al.*, 2000) to serious invasive severe symptoms which may lead to septicemia, meningitis and abortion with high mortality rate of 20-30% (Gandhi and Chikindas, 2007; Swaminthan *et al.*, 2007; Shamloo *et al.*, 2015; Kevenk and Gulel, 2016).

In dairy industry, many problems associated with *L. monocytogenes* contamination are related to minimally processed or post pasteurization contamination from plant environments (Gougouli *et al.*, 2008; Rosshaug *et al.*, 2012 and Olszewska *et al.*, 2015).

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L.monocytogenes has the ability to survive or even grows in a wide range of adverse environmental conditions (Begley *et al.*, 2010 and Cheng *et al.*, 2015) such as refrigeration temperatures, high acidity and salinity and reduced water activity (Gandhi and Chikindas, 2007; Ahmed *et al.*, 2014) makes it a potential hazard in milk and other dairy products.

Therefore, the present study was carried out to satisfy an urgent need to provide data about the presence of *Listeria species* in some dairy products in Beni-Suef governorate and to clarify the virulence of *L.monocytogenes* isolated from dairy products.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Collection of samples:

- A total of two hundred and forty samples of fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese, kareish cheese, yoghurt and talaga cheese (40 of each) were collected from different supermarkets, retail outlet and other markets outlets in Beni-Suef governorate, Egypt.
- All samples were aseptically collected and transferred into individual sterile bags or flasks then transported to the laboratory in insulated coolers containing cold packs and were analyzed immediately.

Isolation and identification of the *Listeria species*:

The isolation of *Listeria species* is adopted according to (Roberts and Green wood, 2003). About 25 ml/g of

each sample was aseptically homogenized in 225 ml of listeria selective enrichment broth (CM0862, Oxoid) supplemented with listeria selective enrichment agents (nalidixic acid, acriflavine and cyclohexamide) (SR0141, Oxoid) and incubated in 30°C for 24-48 h. A loopful of the incubated broth was streaked onto oxford listeria selective agar (CM0856, Oxoid) supplemented with listeria selective supplement (SR0140, Oxoid) which incubated for 48 h at 30°C. The typical greyish green to brownish green colored colonies with black haloes of 1-3 mm in diameter of aesculin hydrolysis were presumed to be *Listeria*.

Five presumptive *Listeria* colonies were picked from each plates of selective agar and streaked onto trypticase soya agar (CM0131, Oxoid) containing (0.6% yeast extract) then incubated at 30°C for 24h for biochemical identification. Non spore forming, Gram positive coccobacilli isolates were tested for catalase test, umbrella growth in motility test medium at 25°C, nitrate reduction, MR/VP test, B.haemolysis activity, CAMP test (synergistic lyses of red blood cells) against *S. aureus* and acid production from fermentation of glucose, rhamnose, xylose and mannitol.

Detection of *Listeria monocytogenes* (hly A gene) by PCR technique:-

Listeria monocytogenes were screened for the presence of Listeriolysin O (hlyA) gene.

The primers used in the study (Aurora *et al.*, 2007)

Primers	Target gene	Length	Primer sequence	Amplification product (bp)
hlyA-F	hlyA	24	5' GCAGTTGCAAGCGCTTGGAGTGAA 3'	456
hlyA-R	hlyA	24	5' GCAACGTATCCTCCAGAGTGATCG 3'	456

Extraction Procedure: (QIA amp DNA Mini Kit):

- 1.5ml of enriched broths was taken into microcentrifuge tubes and bacteria were pelleted by centrifugation at 8000 rpm for 5 min. Re-suspend pellet in PBS to a final volume of 200µl. 20µl QIAGEN protease or proteinase K and 200µl buffer AL were added and mixed for 15S. followed by incubation at 56°C for 10min. 200µl ethanol (96-100%) were added and mixed again for 15S.
- Carefully the mixture was applied and centrifuged at (8000 rpm) for 1 min. The QIA amp Mini spin column was placed in a clean 2ml collection tube (provided) and discarded the tube containing the filtrate. The QIA amp Mini spin column was opened and 500µl buffer AW1 was added and

centrifuged at (8000 rpm) for 1 min. The QIA amp Mini spin column was placed in a clean 2ml collection tube and discarded the tube containing the filtrate. 500µl buffer AW2 was added and centrifuged at full speed (14.000rpm) for 3 min.

- The QIA amp column was placed in a new 2ml collection tube and discarded the old collection tube with the filtrate, then centrifuged at full speed for 10min. The QIA amp column was placed in a clean tube (not provided) and discarded the collection tube containing the filtrate. Carefully the QIA amp column was opened and added 100-200µl buffer AE or distilled water then incubated at (15-25°C) for 3 min and centrifuged at (8000 rpm) for 1 min.

Spectrophotometer:-

The concentration of DNA was measured by using spectrophotometer.

PCR Procedures:

There agents of PCR reaction were set up in a tube:

1 - 25 µlof 2X of PCR Master Mix containing: **enzyme** (DNA polymerase, Taq); **dNTPs** (A, T, G,

C) and **buffer** (50 mM KCl; 10 mM Tris-HCl; 1.5 mM MgCl₂).

2 - 20 pmol primer.

3 - 30-50 ngsample (DNA)

4 - If needed water DNA ase free water and 50 µltotalreaction volume.

Amplification was done in the following condition shown in the next table.

Cycling conditions used for the primers

Steps	Time and Temperature
• Initial denaturation	95°C for 3 min
• Denaturation	94°C for 40 sec
• Annealing	41°C for 40 sec
• Extension	72 °C for 1 min
• Final extension	72 °C for 10min
• Hold	4° C

} 45 cycles

The amplified DNA fragments were resolved by agarose gel electrophoresis, stained with ethidium bromide (e (0.5µg/ml) and the gels can be screened and pictured under UV light.

RESULTS

The genus *Listeria* is ubiquitous in the surrounding environment and therefore, control of this organism during food processing is difficult (Kells and

Gilmour, 2004). Many outbreaks of *L. monocytogenes* infection associated with consumption of milk and dairy products have been reported by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and prevention) (2011) and Gaulin *et al.* (2012).

Table 1: Incidence of *Listeria spp.* in some dairy products

Products	No of samples	Positive samples (%)	
		No of positive samples	%
Fresh cream	40	6	15%
Ice cream	40	8	20%
Butter milk cheese	40	5	12.5%
Kareish cheese	40	5	12.5%
Talaga cheese	40	0	0
Yoghurt	40	0	0
Total	240	24	10%

Table 2: Distribution of *Listeria* species isolated from various dairy products samples

Type of product	<i>L.monocytogenes</i>	<i>L.welshimeri</i>	<i>L. grayii</i>	<i>L. innocua</i>	<i>L. ivanovii</i>	<i>L.seeligeri</i>	Total
Fresh cream	2(8.33%)	0	4(16.66%)	0	0	0	6 (25%)
Ice cream	3(12.5%)	1(4.16%)	3(12.5%)	1(4.16%)	0	0	8(33.34%)
Butter milk cheese	2(8.33%)	1(4.16%)	1(4.16%)	1(4.16%)	0	0	5(20.83%)
Kareish cheese	1(4.16%)	1(4.16%)	3(12.5%)	0	0	0	5(20.83%)
Talaga cheese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yoghurt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8(33.33%)	3(12.5%)	11(45.83%)	2(8.33%)	0	0	24(100%)

In the present study, of the 240 samples of some dairy products, 24(10%) were positive for the presence of *Listeria species* (Table 1). The prevalence of *Listeria spp.* in fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese and Kareish cheese was 6 (15%), 8 (20%), 5(12.5%) and 5(12.5%) respectively, whereas ice cream was the most contaminated product tested. *Listeria spp.* couldn't be isolated from any of Talaga cheese and yoghurt samples.

From the inspection of Table 2, *L. grayii* with (45.83%) was the most prevalent species isolated

followed by *L. monocytogenes* with (33.33%), *L.welshimeri* with (12.51%) and *L. innocua* (8.33%), while other species of *Listeria* pathogen couldn't be isolated from any of the examined samples. All the eight isolates of *listeria monocytogenes* which identified biochemically were genetically confirmed by PCR technique represented in 2(5%), 3(7.5%), 2(5%) and 1(2.5%) in fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese and Kareish cheese respectively (Table 3 and Fig1).

Table 3: Results of PCR method

Type of samples	No. of samples	Positive results for <i>L. monocytogenes</i>	
		Positive PCR samples	%
Fresh cream	40	2	5%
Ice cream	40	3	7.5%
Butter milk cheese	40	2	5%
Kareish cheese	40	1	2.5%

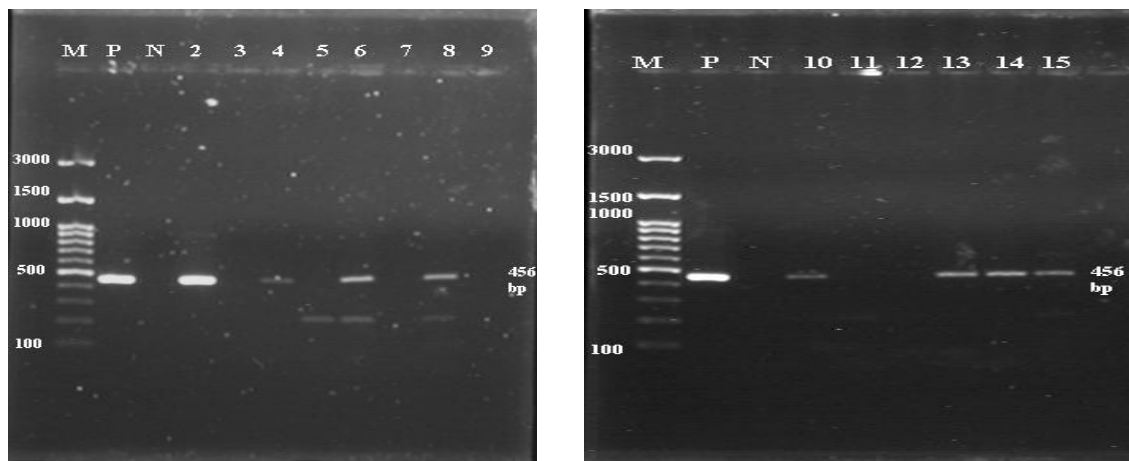


Fig. 1: Agarose gel electrophoresis of *hlyA* gene specific for *L.monocytogenes* by enrichment PCR method
Lane M: DNA marker Ladder (100-3000 bp)
Lane P: Control positive for (*hlyA*) at 456 bp
Lane N: Control negative
Lane 2-15: Isolates of *Listeria monocytogenes* which biochemically identified

DISCUSSION

In the current study, 6(15%) of fresh cream samples were contaminated with *Listeria spp.*, whereas *L. grayii* was the most frequent 4(16.66%) species identified in fresh cream samples followed by *L.monocytogenes* which detected in only 2(8.33%) of the examined samples. Higher rate of contamination with *Listeria spp.* 10(20%) was obtained by Metwally and Ali, (2014), while Shamloo *et al.* (2015) reported low rate of contamination 3(11.11%) with *Listeria spp.*

Unlike to our results, Gunasena *et al.* (1995); El Habib *et al.* (2014) and Shamloo *et al.* (2015) couldn't detect *L.monocytogenes* in all examined fresh cream samples. The occurrence of *Listeria spp.* in fresh cream could be due to the use of raw milk, environmental contamination and insufficient hygiene during production.

Ice cream is one of the widely accepted dairy products that dominate interest of large segments of population (Anonymous 2012). Frequent occurrence of *L. monocytogenes* in ready to eat foods as ice cream as a result of its psychrotrophic genetic ability, implies increased public health risk hazard. The present study revealed that out of 40 examined ice

cream samples, 8(20%) samples yielded growth of *Listeria species*. The prevalence of *L. monocytogenes*, *L. welshimeri*, *L. grayii* and *L. innocua* detected in ice cream samples in this study were 3(12.5%), 1(4.16%), 3(12.5%) and 1(4.16%), respectively. Ice cream samples showed the highest incidence of *Listeria species* among all examined samples.

Nearly similar results (19.04%) was reported by Shamloo *et al.* (2015), while prevalence of *Listeria spp.* was much higher as compared to those observed by Wahba (2002); Rahimi *et al.* (2012); Akya *et al.* (2013); Muhammed *et al.* (2013) and Abd El Tawab *et al.* (2015). High incidence of *Listeria spp.* was recorded by Molla *et al.* (2004) and Mengesha *et al.* (2009).

Contrary to the postulated results, *Listeria spp.* couldn't be isolated from examined ice cream samples in studies performed by Dhanashree *et al.* (2003); Ambily and Beena (2012); El Habib *et al.* (2014); Kevenk and Gulel (2016). On the other hand, Muhammed *et al.* (2013); Akya *et al.* (2013); Metwally and Ali (2014) failed to isolate *L. monocytogenes* from the examined ice cream samples.

The higher incidence of *Listeria spp.* in ice cream samples could be attributed to the contamination of raw milk, low quality of ingredients used, use of polluted water supplies and lack of hygienic measures during processing and handling besides the absence of pasteurization, especially in case of small scale produced ice cream.

Egyptian cheese has a long history as an important part of the modern Egyptian diet with an extended shelf life and is more self stable over the raw material used in the production (Fox *et al.*, 2004). Soft cheeses have been involved in both outbreaks (Goulet *et al.*, 1995) and several sporadic cases (Farber *et al.*, 1990) of listeriosis and are thus considered as risk products.

The present study was conducted to detect the prevalence of *Listeria spp.* and *L. monocytogenes* in 3 types of soft cheeses, Kareish cheese, butter milk cheese and Talaga cheese, whereas the high moisture content of almost 50% of these cheeses make them more suitable for growth of microorganisms (Metwally and Ali, 2014).

Listeria spp. was identified in 5(12.5%) of each Kareish cheese and butter milk cheese, while none of the samples of Talaga cheese was found to contain *Listeria* microorganisms.

The results of Talaga cheese in the present study are in agreement with the results of Atil *et al.* (2011); Akya *et al.* (2013) and Ahmed (2013). In the studies conducted by Kevenk and Gulel (2016); Abd El Tawab *et al.* (2015); Wijendra *et al.* (2014),

L. monocytogenes was isolated with very low incidence of 1(5%), 1(2%) and 4(5%) in the examined white cheese samples.

L. grayii was the most prevalent species isolated from Kareish cheese (12.5%), whereas *L. monocytogenes* and *L. welshimeri* were detected in (4.16%) for each. While in butter milk cheese *L. grayii*, *L. monocytogenes*, *L. welshimeri* and *L. innocua* were isolated from 4.16%, 8.33%, 4.16% and 4.16%, respectively.

In the study performed by Metwally and Ali (2014), *Listeria spp.* was detected in 11(22%) of the examined butter milk cheese from which 8% *L. grayii* followed by 2% *L. innocua* and 1% *L. ivanovii*, while *L. monocytogenes*, *L. welshimeri* and *L. seeligeri* couldn't be isolated from any of the examined samples.

On the other hand, high incidence of *Listeria spp.* in Kareish cheese was detected by Metwally and Ali (2014); Meshref *et al.* (2015), while lower incidence was reported by Derra *et al.* (2013); Muhammed *et al.* (2013); Ismail *et al.* (2014); Abd El Tawab *et al.* (2015).

In a study performed by Rahimi *et al.* (2010), *Listeria spp.* and *L. monocytogenes* were isolated in 18.9 and 10 of 90 cheese samples, while in another study conducted by Arslanand Ozdemir (2008) *Listeria spp.* was detected in 33.1% of homemade white cheese samples.

The type and composition of cheese, pH, % of moisture, % of salt, ripeness of cheese, storage conditions, starter cultures and virulence of pathogens influenced the reproduction of *L. monocytogenes* in cheese (Kovincic *et al.*, 1991). The high incidence of these organisms in different types of cheeses may be accounted for by insufficient hygiene during milking, manufacturing process, ineffective pasteurization and/or post pasteurization contamination.

The absence of *Listeria spp.* in Talaga cheese could be attributed to the presence of undesirable conditions during cheese manufacturing process such as high concentration of sodium chloride, low acidity, heat treatment and high moisture content and /or preservation in salted whey (Zamani-Zadeh *et al.*, 2011).

High incidence of *Listeria spp.* In Kareish cheese and butter milk cheese may be revealed to traditional homemade manufacturing technique utilized, whereas separating milk for Kareish cheese and the collection of butter milk cheese from butter churn are steps difficult to be controlled besides these cheeses don't contain salt content nor preserved in brine solution as to Talaga cheese.

Yoghurt is one of the most popular fermented dairy products which has a wide acceptance worldwide. In the present study, none of the yoghurt samples was found to contain *Listeria spp.* which may be attributed to antagonistic activity of starter and effective heat treatment Arquez *et al.* (2005) and Vermeulen *et al.* (2007).

The results obtained in the current study are almost similar to those of Arslan and Ozdemir (2008); AbdElAal and Atta (2009); Rahimi *et al.* (2012); Ismail *et al.* (2014) ; Metwally and Ali (2014); Shamloo *et al.* (2015).

While studies performed by Shahbazi *et al.* (2013); Muhammed *et al.* (2013); Seyoum *et al.* (2015) *L.monocytogenes* was detected in only one sample.

In study of Faleiro *et al.* (2003) revealed absence of *L.monocytogenes* in all examined samples of Iranian fermented milk drink to the combined inhibitory effect of low pH and the antimicrobial activity of some compounds that probably secreted by lactic acid bacteria present in these fermented products.

Detection of *Listeria monocytogenes* hlyA gene by using PCR technique:

Molecular biology method based on Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay was characterized by high specificity, sensitivity, rapidity and it may permit direct detection of pathogen without need for isolation of pure culture (Zhou and Jiao 2005).

Thus, this study was attempted for further confirmation of *L. monocytogenes* isolates through the detection of one of its virulence factors. PCR was carried out targeting the virulence factor Listeriolysin O (LLO) which encoded by hlyA gene and present only in virulent strains of the species and required for virulence Jay, (1996); Ueda *et al.* (2005); Aurora *et al.* (2007); Suriyapriya *et al.* (2016).

In this study, the result of PCR technique was represented in Table 3 and Figure 3 confirmed the presence of *L.monocytogenes* in 2(5%), 3(7.5%), 2(5%) and 1(2.5%) of fresh cream, ice cream, butter milk cheese and Kareish cheese samples, respectively.

Abd El Tawab *et al.* (2015) detected that the (hlyA) gene was amplified in 5(100%) *L.monocytogenes* strains. Also Nayak *et al.* (2015) detected virulence listeriolysin O(hlyA) gene in the all three *L.monocytogenes* which isolated from raw milk samples.

In a study conducted by Al Ashmawy *et al.* (2014) Enrichment PCR investigated hly A gene in 28 and 32 of the examined Damietta cheese and Kareish cheese, respectively. In another study performed by

Wijendra *et al.* (2014) *L.monocytogenes* was positively detected by using PCR technique in 10(12%), 8 (10%), 4 (5%) and 3(4%) of ice cream, curd, cheese and yoghurt samples respectively, while Derra *et al.* (2013) reported that only one sample (1.7%) of cottage cheese was positive for *L.monocytogenes* by PCR.

PCR results showed that detection of virulent (hlyA) gene of *L. monocytogenes* which present only in the virulent strains in fresh cream, ice cream, Kareish cheese and butter milk cheese suggested the presence of a significant public health hazard linked to the consumption of these products.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that some dairy products sold in Beni-suef markets may be considered as a threat to consumers. They are significant vehicles of *L. monocytogenes* which regularly causing listeriosis outbreaks. Therefore clear risk factors and people that are susceptible for acquiring listeriosis should not consume such products. This indicates importance and need for permanent control, and detection of potential sources of contamination. Introduction of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), as away of control in the process of production and processing the risk of contamination of products with these pathogen micro organisms is reduced.

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مدى تواجد انواع الليستيريا في بعض منتجات الالبان في محافظة بنى سويف

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اجريت هذه الدراسة لتحديد مدى انتشار ميكروب الليستيريا مونوسيتوجينيس والانواع الاخرى للليستيريا في بعض المنتجات اللبنية. تم تجميع ٢٤٠ عينة من القشدة الطازجة ، الأيس كريم، جبنة اللبن الخض، الجبنة القريش، والجبنة التلاجة والزبادى (٤٠ عينة من كل منتج) عشوائيا من مختلف السوبرماركت ومنافذ البيع بمحافظة بنى سويف . وجد ان ٢٤ (١٠%) من هذه العينات كانت تحتوى على ميكروب الليستيريا. وكانت نسبة تواجد ميكروب الليستيريا فى القشدة الطازجة ، الأيس كريم ، جبنة اللبن الخض والجبنة القريش هي ٦ (١٥%) ، ٨ (٢٠%) ، ٥ (١٢.٥%) و ٥ (٢.٥%) بالترتيب ولم يتم عزل الميكروب من عينات الجبنة التلاجة او الزبادى. وقد كان ميكروب الليستيريا جرای هو الاكثر تواجد بنسبة ٤٥.٨٣% يليه ميكروب الليستيريا مونوسيتوجينيس بنسبة ٣٣.٣٣% ثم الليستيريا ولشمرى بنسبة ١٢.٥% ثم ميكروب الليستيريا انكوا بنسبة ٨.٣٣%. وقد اظهر اختبار تفاعل البلمرة التسلسلى عن وجود احد الجينات المسؤولة عن ضراوة ميكروب الليستيريا مونوسيتوجينيس وهو الجين (hlyA) لجميع عترات الليستيريا مونوسيتوجينيس وما ينتج عنه خطورة التعرض لداء الليستريات ولذلك فأن هناك ضرورة لتطبيق جميع الشروط الصحية اثناء تصنيع ، تخزين وتسويق هذه المنتجات.