

Occurrence of listeria monocytogenes in food items available in retail outlets in Colombo

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Human listeriosis although relatively a rare disease could cause serious illness and high mortality. *Listeria monocytogenes* is a food born pathogen. The type of foods which harbour the organism in Sri Lanka have not been adequately determined. A total number of 202 samples of various food items were obtained from the retail outlets in Colombo. They were subjected to conventional culture for *Listeria monocytogenes*. 13 out of 60 (22 per cent) frozen raw chicken samples were positive for *L.monocytogenes*. Raw milk, pasteurized milk, ice cream, curd, yoghurt and green leafy vegetables, mukunuwanna (*alternanthera sessilis*) and gotukola (*Centella asiatica*) did not contain *L.monocytogenes*.