

Knowledge, attitudes and practices of raw milk consumers in the Pacific Northwest

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Foodborne disease epidemiologists

ABSTRACT:

Background: Currently, the majority of foodborne outbreaks associated with milk products are due to the consumption of raw milk. There is limited knowledge as to why consumers choose to drink raw milk instead of pasteurized milk. Objective: To determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding raw milk consumption. Methods: A survey was distributed via online ads targeting users in the Pacific Northwest. Descriptive statistics were generated to characterize the study population and bivariate analyses were performed to determine differences in knowledge, attitudes and practices between identified consumption groups (i.e. current, former, never). We also identified current consumers as exclusive or non-exclusive. Results: A total of 227 surveys were completed. Former raw milk consumers most often cited convenience (35.8%) as the reason for not consuming raw milk. Raw milk consumers most often cited drinking raw milk due to taste (72.4%) and perceived holistic health benefits (67.2%). Also, 67.9% of current consumers reported not trusting state health officials' recommendations regarding food safety. Conclusions and Implications: Raw milk consumers, particularly those who only consume raw milk, reported health benefits and concerns about safety of pasteurized milk as reasons for consuming raw milk, providing themes for future Interventions to address.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Describe the demographic profiles of raw milk consumer groups in the Pacific Northwest.
- Identify reasons why current raw milk consumers consume raw milk

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