

## Prevalence of *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus* in raw milk

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### Abstract

A total of 100 random samples of raw milk were collected from cooler tanks in different supermarkets at Damietta Governorate, A. R. E and examined for prevalence of *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. The obtained results revealed that *Bacillus cereus* was detected in 20% of total raw milk samples and its count ranged from  $2.0 \times 10^2$  to  $6.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/ml with a mean count  $9.12 \times 10^3$  cfu/ml, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* was detected in 5% of total examined samples, while *Staphylococcus aureus* was detected in 24% of total examined samples and its count ranged from  $2.2 \times 10^2$  to  $2.7 \times 10^5$  cfu/ml with a mean count  $3.94 \times 10^4$  cfu/ml of raw milk. All isolates of *Staph. aureus* from raw milk were found coagulase-positive strains and examined for staphylococcal enterotoxins (SE). None of *S. aureus* strains which isolated from raw milk samples produced enterotoxins A, B, C, D or E. Significance of the obtained results on raw milk quality, public health risk, prevention and control as well as recommendations for production of raw milk safe for human consumption were discussed.

### Key words:

raw milk , *Bacillus cereus* , *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, enterotoxins A, B, C, D, E

### Introduction

Milk is very rich in nutrients which provide the nutritional needs of human body rather than any other single food in the nature. Unfortunately, it is considered to be an ideal medium for growth of several types of microorganism which contaminate milk from various sources during milking, handling, cooling and distribution. These contaminants impair milk utility and consumption. Moreover, milk from cows with sub-clinical mastitis accidentally mixed into bulk milk enters food chain and poses a threat to human health. *Bacillus cereus* is a common contaminant of raw milk whose spores survive pasteurization. *Bacillus cereus* produce two different types of toxin known as an agent of food poisoning and include diarrhoeal type and emetic type (Eley, 1996). *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is a psychrotrophic

bacteria that contaminate and grow in raw milk , produce proteinase and lipase, while the pathogenic strains produce heat-labile enterotoxins (Mickova *et al.*, 1989 and Grover *et al.*, 1993). While *Staphylococcus aureus* produce thermostable enterotoxins which are serologically distinct types and implicated in staphylococcal food poisoning (Eley, 1996). Therefore, this work was planned to throw light on the content of raw milk contamination with *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus* and their public health significance.

### Materials and Methods

#### 1- Collection samples.

A total of 100 random samples of raw milk (500cc each) were collected from cooler tanks in different supermarkets at Damietta Gover-

norate. Each raw milk samples was kept into sterile capped bottle, labeled and sealed separately to avoid contamination. The collected samples were kept in sealed containers with ice cubes and transmitted to the laboratory for examination without delay.

## **2- Preparation of collected samples. (A.P.H. A., 1992)**

Each sample container was mixed thoroughly and vigorously by shaking before examination. Eleven ml of each raw milk sample were added to 99 ml of peptone water / saline solution into sterile bottles and thoroughly mixed to make a dilution of 1/10, from which decimal serial dilutions were prepared.

## **3- Enumeration and identification of *Bacillus cereus*.**

Plate count technique using spread plate inoculation method recommended by (Kim and Geopferet, 1971). 0.25 ml from each prepared dilution of raw milk sample was transferred and evenly spread onto the surface of *Bacillus cereus* medium supplemented with polymyxin B and egg yolk emulsion. All plates with inoculated media were incubated at 30 °C for 24 hr aerobically. Three or more suspected turquoise blue colonies of *Bacillus cereus* which surrounded by precipitated zone of lecithinase activity were purified and streaked onto blood agar plates and incubated at 30 °C for 24 hr aerobically for further confirmation and identification with biochemical tests according to (Cowan and Steel, 1974) and (Winn *et al.*, 2006). Total number of *Bacillus cereus* per milliliter of each raw milk sample was calculated and recorded.

## **4- Enumeration and identification of *Staph. aureus* (A.P.H.A., 2001)**

Plate count technique using spread plate inoculation method was used. 0.25 ml from each prepared dilution of raw milk samples was transferred and evenly spread onto the surface of Baird –Parker agar plates and incubated at 35 °C for 24-48 hr aerobically. Appearance of black colonies surrounded by clear halo zone

was considered to be presumptive *Staph. aureus* and used for further purification by subcultivation on Mannitol salt agar according to (Winn *et al.*, 2006). Confirmation and identification of the suspected colonies of *staph. aureus* were done by using various biochemical tests according to the methods described by (Cruickshank *et al.*, 1975), while the confirmation by coagulase test was done according to the method described by (Monica, 1991). Total count of coagulase-positive *Staph. aureus* per milliliter of each raw milk sample was calculated and recorded.

## **5- Isolation and identification of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (Roberts *et al.*, 1995).**

One ml of each raw milk sample was inoculated into 10 ml of sterile nutrient broth and incubated at 37°C for 24 hr aerobically. A loopful from the incubated tubes was transferred and evenly streaked onto the surface of *Pseudomonas* selective agar medium with CFC *Pseudomonas* supplement. All inoculated plates were incubated at 25-30 °C for 24-48 hr aerobically. Suspected colonies were small and blue- green in colour. The purified colonies were inoculated onto plates of King's medium (King *et al.*, 1954) and incubated at 37°C for 48 hr to enhance pyocyanin production which distinguished as blue-green in colour. All suspected colonies of *Ps. aeruginosa* were used for further identification with biochemical tests according to (Krieg and Holt, 1984 and Winn *et al.*, 2006).

## **6- Detection of staphylococcal enterotoxins (SE).**

*Staphylococcus aureus* strains which isolated from raw milk samples in present study were examined for production of staphylococcal enterotoxins A,B,C,D and E by using Enzyme-Linked Immuno-Sorbent Assay (ELISA) according to (Freed *et al.*, 1982 and Lapeyre *et al.*, 1988).

## **Results and Discussion**

The results recorded in Table (1) revealed the incidence and total cell count of *Bacillus cer-*

eus in the examined raw milk samples which collected from cooler tanks in different super-markets at Damietta Governorate during this study. The obtained results showed that *Bacillus cereus* was isolated from 20 samples which represent 20% of total examined raw milk samples and its count was ranged from  $2.0 \times 10^2$  to  $6.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/ml with a mean count of  $9.12 \times 10^3$  cfu/ml. Lower incidence and count of *B. cereus* in raw milk samples than the obtained results were reported by (Hahn *et al.*, 1999; Lim *et al.*, 2000; Berthold and Molska, 2002; Kivaria *et al.*, 2006; Vyletelova *et al.*, 2011 and Jackson *et al.*, 2012). While, higher incidence and count of *B. cereus* in raw milk were recorded by (Larsen and Jorgensen, 1997 and Bedi *et al.*, 2005). Nearly similar incidence of *B. Cereus* in raw milk was recorded by (Ruusunen *et al.*, 2013).

The sources which may result in contamination of raw milk with (psychrotrophic) *Bacillus cereus* spores and vegetative cells on farms include air, soil, grass, bedding (used and unused), feed (hay, silage, concentrates, beet),

drinking water, faeces, teats, udders, milking equipment and tankers (Giffel *et al.*, 1995; Huang *et al.*, 1998; Christiansson *et al.*, 1999 and Magnusson *et al.*, 2007). In addition, bacterial biofilm which formed on surfaces of stainless steel due to inadequate sanitization of dairy equipments and tanks of milking, storage and transporting protect food- borne pathogens against external threats and lead to contamination of raw milk by *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus* (Munsch-Alactossava and Alatosava, 2006; Simoes *et al.*, 2010; Raats *et al.*, 2011 and Bayoumi *et al.*, 2012). *Bacillus cereus* is a common contaminant of raw milk whose spores survive pasteurization. *Bacillus cereus* diarrhoeagenic enterotoxin was detected in both raw and pasteurized milk samples submitted for routine quality analysis and the enterotoxin was less affected by heating in milk (Baker and Griffiths, 1995 and Odumeru *et al.*, 1997). While, emetic toxin of *B. cereus* is a heat stable and can withstand exposure at 121°C for 90 minutes (Eley, 1996).

**Table (1).** Statistical analytical results of total *Bacillus cereus* count / ml of raw milk samples.

| No. of examined samples | Positive samples |    | Min.              | Max.              | Mean $\pm$ SE                           |
|-------------------------|------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                         | No.              | %  |                   |                   |                                         |
| 100                     | 20               | 20 | $2.0 \times 10^2$ | $6.0 \times 10^4$ | $9.12 \times 10^3 \pm 2.81 \times 10^3$ |

*Bacillus cereus* is an environmental microorganism having thermotolerant and psychrotrophic properties. *B. cereus* having proteolytic and lipolytic activities in dairy products stored under refrigeration (Montanhini and Bersot, 2013). Acidification is a common method of preservation and as the acidity of fermented milk increased, *B. cereus* fails to survive (Hassan *et al.*, 2010). Presence of *Bacillus cereus* in raw milk may represent a risk of food poisoning due to *B. cereus* diarrhoeal enterotoxin (Baker and Griffiths, 1995 and Odumeru *et al.*, 1997). In addition, the shelf life of pasteurized dairy products depends partly on the concentration of *Bacillus cereus* spores in raw milk (Vissers *et al.*, 2007).

Results recorded in Table (2) revealed that only

five samples of the examined raw milk were contaminated by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and representing 5% of total examined raw milk samples. Nearly similar incidence of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in raw milk samples was reported by (Uraz and Citak, 1998), while lower incidence was reported by (Ahmed *et al.*, 2002). Higher incidence of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in raw milk samples than the obtained results was recorded by (Otte *et al.*, 1978; Mickova *et al.*, 1989 and Ezzeldeen *et al.*, 2004).

The sources which may result in contamination of raw milk with *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in farms include milking equipments, moist areas of the cow's body (udder and teats), drinking bowls, feeds, floors and milker's hands (Otte *et*

*al.*, 1978). Moreover, apparently healthy lactating cows with subclinical mastitis secrete milk that looks apparently normal for long time and may be contaminated with *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* when implicated in cases of bovine subclinical mastitis (Malinowski *et al.*, 2006 and Ibrahim, 2007). *Ps.aeruginosa* is a psychrotrophic bacteria that contaminate and grow

in raw milk, produce proteinase and lipase, while the pathogenic strains produce heat-labile enterotoxins (Mickova *et al.*, 1989 and Grover *et al.*, 1993). As *Ps.aeruginosa* is destroyed by HTST pasteurization, it is suggested that raw milk should be pasteurized before consumption (Otte *et al.*, 1978).

**Table (2).** Incidence of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in the examined raw milk samples.

| No. of examined samples | Positive samples |   |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|
|                         | No.              | % |
| 100                     | 5                | 5 |

Results recorded in Table (3) revealed that *Staphylococcus aureus* was isolated from 24 samples which represent 24% of total examined raw milk samples which collected from cooler tanks during this study and its count was ranged from  $2.2 \times 10^2$  to  $2.7 \times 10^5$  cfu/ml with a mean count of  $3.94 \times 10^4$  cfu/ml of raw milk. All isolated strains of *Staph.aureus* were found coagulase positive. Higher incidence and count

of *Staph.aureus* in raw milk samples than the obtained results were recorded by (Bainotti *et al.*, 1990; Adesiyun *et al.*, 1995; Gomes and Gallo, 1995; Jorgensen *et al.*, 2005 and Guecukoglu *et al.*, 2012), while lower incidence was reported by (Tsegmed *et al.*, 2007; Zouharova and Rysanek, 2008; Fagundes *et al.*, 2010; Alian *et al.*, 2012 and Gundogan *et al.*, 2012).

**Table (3).** Statistical analytical results of total *Staphylococcus aureus* count / ml of raw milk samples.

| No. of examined samples | Positive samples |    | Min.              | Max.              | Mean $\pm$ SE                           |
|-------------------------|------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                         | No.              | %  |                   |                   |                                         |
| 100                     | 24               | 24 | $2.2 \times 10^2$ | $2.7 \times 10^5$ | $3.94 \times 10^4 \pm 1.17 \times 10^4$ |

*Staph.aureus* is a contagious pathogen, causing a wide range of infections in both human and animal. It can be found as a commensal on the skin and in the anterior nares of the nose. This organism may be present in the air, in milk and in sewage. It produce thermostable toxins known as staphylococcal enterotoxins which are serologically distinct types (A, B, C1, C2, C3, D, E and TSST-1) and implicated in staphylococcal food poisoning except TSST-1 (Eley, 1996). *Staph.aureus* was implicated in many cases of both clinical and subclinical mastitis in bovines which consider the main source of bulk tank milk contamination with *Staph.aureus* (Workineh *et al.*, 2002; Kalmus *et al.*, 2011 and Sharma *et al.*, 2012). Most

strains of *Staph. aureus* isolated from raw milk produce Staphylococcal enterotoxins (SE) which may be transmitted to the dairy products during processing and represent a direct risk to the health of consumers (Borelli *et al.*, 2006; Joffe and Baranovics, 2006; Arcuri *et al.*, 2010; Hunt *et al.*, 2012 and Valero-Leal, 2012). When raw milk was subjected to heat treatments equal to or greater than pasteurization, no staphylococci were detected in the resulting heated milk or cheese (Zottola *et al.*, 1969).

The obtained results revealed that none of the 24 strains of *staph.aureus* which isolated from raw milk samples produced enterotoxins A, B, C, D, or E. This obtained result was in an

agreement with the results which reported by (Castro *et al.*, 1986; Gomes and Gallo, 1995 and Tsegmed *et al.*, 2007).

### Conclusion & Recommendations

Data given by the obtained results from this work indicate that some samples of raw milk which exposed for sale in cooler tanks of supermarkets at Damietta Governorate are of inferior quality due to its contamination with *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. Contamination of raw milk with these pathogenic and psychrotrophic bacteria may lead at time either to development of objectionable change rendering the milk unfit for consumption or increase the risk of food poisoning and infection with respective pathogenic bacteria. Contamination of raw milk with these types of pathogenic bacteria may be due to improper hygienic measures during milking, handling, transportation, cooling, storage and using unsanitized dairy equipments and cooler tanks for raw milk distribution. Moreover, raw milk of cattle with sub-clinical mastitis may be accidentally mixed into bulk milk and represent an additional route of raw milk contamination with these pathogenic bacteria. Therefore, to save a lot of raw milk from being contaminated and deteriorated on the markets and safeguard the consumers from being infected, the following suggestions are recommended: routine examination of dairy animals and elimination of both diseased and mastitic cases from milk production until treated. Strict hygienic measures should be applied for healthy udder, mastitic udder, teat dip, milking machine, dairy utensils, bulk tanks, cooler tanks and worker's hands. Application of the proper hygienic practices and periodical medical examination of workers and persons who sharing in production, handling, cold storage and sale of raw milk. Educational programmes should be imposed for milk producers and handlers to improve the quality of raw milk and its products to ensure maximum safety to the consumers. Adequate sanitization of dairy equipments and tanks which used for milking, storage, transporting and sale of raw

milk to prevent bacterial biofilm. Pasteurization as well as acidification are common methods of milk preservation.

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## مدى تواجد ميكروب باسيلس سيرس وميكروب سدومونس إيروجينوزا وميكروب المكور العنقودي الذهبي في اللبن الخام

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### الملخص العربي

أجريت هذه الدراسة للوقوف على مدى تواجد كل من ميكروب باسيلس سيرس وميكروب سدومونس إيروجينوزا وميكروب المكور العنقودي الذهبي في عدد مائة عينة عشوائية من اللبن الخام الموجود بالمبردات في منافذ البيع المختلفة بأسواق قرى ومدن محافظة دمياط . وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود ميكروب باسيلس سيرس في عدد 20 عينة (20%) وميكروب سدومونس إيروجينوزا في عدد 5 عينة (5%) وميكروب المكور العنقودي الذهبي في عدد 24 عينة (24%) من إجمالي عدد عينات اللبن الخام . كما أظهرت النتائج أن العدد الكلي لميكروب باسيلس سيرس تراوح من  $10 \times 10^2$  إلى  $10 \times 10^6$  خلية / سم<sup>3</sup> ومتوسط العد  $10 \times 9.12$  خلية / سم<sup>3</sup> وأن العدد الكلي لميكروب المكور العنقودي الذهبي تراوح من  $10 \times 2.2$  إلى  $10 \times 2.7$  خلية / سم<sup>3</sup> ومتوسط العد  $10 \times 3.94$  خلية / سم<sup>3</sup> من عينات اللبن الخام الإيجابية . كما أظهرت النتائج أن جميع عترات المكور العنقودي الذهبي المعزولة من العينات كانت إيجابية لإنزيم التجلط وتم اختبارها لإفراز سموم المكورات العنقودية . هذا وقد تم مناقشة النتائج وتوضيح الأهمية الصحية والاقتصادية لتواجد مثل هذه الميكروبات في اللبن الخام ووضع التوصيات والمقترحات اللازمة للحد من تواجد تلك الميكروبات وإنتاج لبن صحي آمن للاستهلاك الأدمي .