

## FIRST CONSENSUS WORKSHOP ON FOOD SAFETY

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### Abstract

Food-borne diseases: Epidemiological situation and trends throughout Europe  
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Food-borne disease caused by microbiological hazards is a large and growing public health problem. Most countries with systems for reporting cases of food-borne diseases have documented significant increases over the past 20 years in the incidences of diseases caused by micro-organisms in food including *Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Listeria monocytogenes* or *E. coli* O157 among others.

Chemicals are a significant source of food-borne diseases, although effects are often difficult to link with a particular food. Chemical contaminants in food include natural toxicants such as mycotoxins or environmental contaminants such as dioxins, mercury, lead, and radionuclides. Food additives, pesticide and veterinary drugs are widely used too and it is essential to assure that these uses are safe.

Surveillance of food-borne disease and food contamination monitoring are essential tools for risk assessment. For this reason main efforts are directed to the development of adequate methods of surveillance of food-borne diseases and food contamination monitoring to provide the necessary data for quantitative microbiological and chemical risk assessment.

This paper presents both data on food-borne diseases in the WHO European Region and information on chemical contaminants, additives and residues in foods that may have an adverse impact in health. Future directions to prevent both microbiological and chemical hazards are discussed.