Assessing the Microbial Quality (*Listeria monocytogenes*) of Chicken Meat by Polymerase Chain Reaction in Different Areas of Chennai

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**Abstract**

*Listeria monocytogenes* is widely distributed and found in many food commodities. Post processing contamination is the major source and cross contamination may also occur at the retail shop and also in products due to improper hygienic practices. A study was conducted to identify the presence of *L. monocytogenes* in chicken meat by polymerase chain reaction. 40 samples were collected from different areas of Chennai and were tested for the presence of *L. monocytogenes* by targeting prfA gene with 290bp by PCR. None of the samples were shown to be positive for *L. monocytogenes*. The test reveals that the processing can be performed hygienically.

**Keywords** *L. monocytogenes*, Polymerase Chain Reaction, Chicken meat

**Materials and Methods**

Chicken meat samples of around 40 numbers were collected from different retail outlets of Chennai city. The samples placed in sterile
polythene bags and transported hygienically to the Department of Meat Science and Technology, Madras Veterinary College, Chennai – 7 in clean insulated box with ice packs. Before screening, 25 gram of meat sample was homogenized in 225 ml of BPW and incubated at 37°C for 18 hours.

The meat homogenate obtained was then subjected to DNA extraction using Bacterial DNA extraction kit and PCR analysis for the presence of *L. monocytogenes* by targeting *prfA* gene with 290bp. A 20 µl of reaction mixture was set up in 0.2 ml PCR tube with following components such as master mix - 10µl, forward primer-1 µl, reverse primer-1 µl, template DNA-1 µl and nuclease free water-7 µl. The PCR amplification was carried out in Master Cycler Gradient Thermo cycler (M/s. Eppendorf, Germany) with the following cycling conditions of initial denaturation at 94°C for 5 minutes, followed by 30 cycles of denaturation (94°C for 30 seconds), annealing (52°C for 30 seconds) and extension (72°C for 30 seconds) and subsequently a final extension at 72°C for 7 minutes. The PCR product obtained was subjected to electrophoresis in 2% Agarose gel. Ethidium bromide with concentration of 10mg/ml was added at the rate of 5µl / 100 ml of Agarose. Electrophoresis is carried out using 1X TAE buffer at 100 volts for 30 minutes. The gel was viewed under UV illuminator and documented using gel documentation system.

**Results and Discussion**

Around 40 chicken meat samples were collected from different retail outlets of Chennai. The meat homogenate obtained was subjected to DNA extraction using Bacterial DNA extraction kit and the developed PCR was used to detect *Listeria monocytogenes*. None of the sample showed positive for the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in the retail chicken meat by PCR (Figure 1 and 2). Screening of chicken meat from different zone wise details were given below (Table 1).
Table 1 Screening of chicken meat samples collected from different retail outlets of Chennai

| Zone | Name             | No. of samples | No. of positive samples by m-PCR |
|------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1    | Manali           | 6              | Listeria monocytogenes          |
| 2    | Tondiarpet       | 6              | -                                |
| 3    | Thiru-vi-ka nagar| 6              | -                                |
| 4    | Valasaravakkam   | 6              | -                                |
| 5    | Alandur          | 6              | -                                |
| 6    | Perungudi        | 5              | -                                |
| 7    | Adyar            | 5              | -                                |
| Total|                  | 40             | 0                                |

This study states that screening of chicken meat samples from retail outlets were carried out to assess the usefulness of the PCR technique and the level of processing of retail chicken meat. The 40 chicken meat samples collected from different areas of Chennai city were not positive for Listeria monocytogenes. The existence and control of Listeria species and Listeria monocytogenes in broiler’s ceca, meat and skin at the retail outlets of Ismailia city were studied in Egypt. The results of the study revealed that 92, 42 and 70 percent of broiler’s ceca, meat and skin respectively were contaminated with Listeria spp. From the Listeria spp. positive samples, L. monocytogenes were highest in ceca (60%, 30 of 50 samples), followed by skin (34%, 17 of 50 samples), and meat (16%, 8 of 50 samples) (Ahmed and Nashwa, 2010). Screening of food samples like ground meat, beef and pork revealed the presence of 10 copies /µl of Listeria monocytogenes (Zhang et al., 2009). He detected 10^{5} CFU/ml of Listeria monocytogenes in 500 µl of pre-enrichment broth without incubation and 3 x 10^{1} CFU/ml
after incubation (Barocci et al., 2008). *Listeria monocytogenes* was detected in pork sausage and mozzarella cheese at a contamination level of 1 CFU/g before culture enrichment (Amagliani et al., 2007). This study reveals that PCR is one of the effective and time saving methods to detect microorganism. Hence the process is carried out in a hygienic manner or there may be some other reason for the absence of microorganism in chicken meat. Similarly He (Kozacinski et al., 2006) conducted a study to assess the microbial quality of chicken meat in Croatian market and reported *L. monocytogenes* in chicken breast and skin (4.76%). A study was conducted to detect the prevalence of Listeria spp. in raw chicken and ready-to-eat (RTE) chicken products in Amman, Jordan and they found that *L. monocytogenes* was present in 9.4% of fresh dressed broiler chickens, 13.3% of RTE chicken-shawarma, 76.7% of RTE chickenburger, and 30% of RTE chicken-sausages whereas mortadella samples were free of *L. monocytogenes*. (Osaili et al., 2011).

**Acknowledgments**

I am very much grateful to all my Department staffs and my friends who have helped me in collecting samples from different areas of Chennai.

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**How to cite this article:** Satheesh Raja, S., V. Apparao, R. Narendra Babu and Thamizhannal, M. 2018. Assessing the Microbial Quality (*Listeria monocytogenes*) of Chicken Meat by Polymerase Chain Reaction in Different Areas of Chennai. *Int.J.Curr.Microbiol.App.Sci.* 7(05): 932-935. doi: https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcemas.2018.705.114