

PS4.2

Food Poisoning

14:30 Theatre 2

Food Poisoning – Epidemiology*Lam FTS**Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*

Food-borne diseases, involving a wide spectrum of illnesses, are a growing public health problem worldwide. It is due to the ingestion of foods contaminated with micro-organisms or chemicals, which may occur at any stage from food production to consumption, i.e. “farm to fork”. Diarrhoeal diseases kill approximately 2.2 million people annually, a significant proportion is related to food-borne.

Food poisoning has been made statutory notifiable since March 1974 in Hong Kong. Food poisoning is one of the scheduled infectious diseases under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). If a medical practitioner suspects a case of food poisoning, whether or not the infected person has died, he shall notify the Director of Health immediately.

In 2013, Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health recorded more than 300 food poisoning notifications with more than 1,000 persons affected. Common causative agents of food poisoning are salmonella, vibrio parahemolyticus and staphylococcus aureus.

Food poisoning investigations include establishing the existence of an outbreak, identifying the causative agent and the affected food items, laboratory investigations, environmental investigations, control of outbreak, communications and conclusion of a case.

In this session, experiences in epidemiological investigation of suspected food poisoning and the collaboration between the Hospital Authority, Centre for Health Protection and Centre for Food Safety in prevention and control of food poisoning will be shared.