Author’s response to reviews

Title: Food safety in hospital: knowledge, attitudes and practices of nursing staff of two hospitals in Sicily, Italy

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Reviewer: Mehrdah Askarian

According to the suggestion of the reviewer comparison with the results of the paper referenced as 20 has been added with reference to several issues. The AA. think the results described in the other paper about food hygiene in hospital catering (reference 19) has sufficiently been cited for comparison.

Reviewer: Italo Francesco Angelillo

Introduction
a) the objectives of the study have been completed according to the suggestion of the reviewer

Methods
a) setting. The role of the nursing staff during the handling food procedures has been clarified
b) survey instrument. It has been clarified that the questionnaire was proposed to all nurses who were potentially involved in food reception and delivery
c) survey instruments. The AA. well know that, from a strict methodological point of view, self-administration and confidentiality are adopted as a tool to obtain more reliable answers, whereas face-to-face interview enhances response rates. However, in the peculiar setting of the hospital wards, these strategies, in particular self-administration, were used to obtain a higher prevalence of respondents among a personnel routinely working in different hours of the day (8-hours shift) and, often, different days of the week
d) statistical procedures. It has been clarified, according to the suggestion of the reviewer, that study has investigated the association of some KAPs with both demographic and work-related characteristics, such as length of service and hospital. Analysis by logistic regression has been added.

Results
a) According to the suggestion of the reviewer, almost all results could virtually refer to the corresponding tables. However, the AA. think that a continuous redirection of the reader to the Tables can be detrimental to the fluidity of reading and appreciation of the results. So, in their opinion, it would be useful to retain in the text the more relevant findings.
b) The question about thawing and refreezing has been debated by the AA and has been eventually reformulated. It now proposes the question in a simpler way (nothing/all), but the answer pattern is somewhat opposed to that of the remaining questions. This could have been a potential source of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, even if 2% only of the respondent nurses was classified in the "unanswered/uncertain" group. On the other hand, the microbiological risk from refreezing is also questionable and, eventually, the question is not specially successful, unless it is included into a more generally poor food handling practice.

Discussion
a) The limits of the study in relation to the overall low response rate have been added into the discussion. The differences in the staff of the two hospitals are the results of our choice to assemble nurses from a paediatric and a general hospital. Moreover, a comparison between performances of the two different hospital was beyond the purposes of our study.
b) The suggestion has been accepted and the paragraph eliminated