Attributing the Human Disease Burden of Foodborne Infections to Specific Sources

Foodborne diseases are an important cause of human illness worldwide. Humans acquire these infections from a variety of sources and routes of transmission. Many efforts have been made in the last decades to prevent and control foodborne diseases, particularly foodborne zoonoses. However, information on the impact of these interventions is limited. To identify and prioritize successful food safety interventions, it is important to attribute the burden of human illness to the specific sources. Defining scientific concepts and harmonizing terminology for "source attribution" is essential for understanding and improving attribution methodologies and for sharing knowledge within the scientific community. We propose harmonized nomenclature, and describe the various approaches for human illness source attribution and their usefulness to address specific public health questions.

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