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**CONTAMINAÇÃO MICROBIOLÓGICA E AVALIAÇÃO DE MÉTODOS DE  
HIGIENIZAÇÃO DE PANOS DE LIMPEZA UTILIZADOS EM SERVIÇOS DE  
ALIMENTAÇÃO**

Dissertação apresentada ao Curso de Pós  
Graduação em Ciência e Tecnologia de  
Alimentos como um dos requisitos para  
obtenção do grau de Mestre em Ciência e  
Tecnologia de Alimentos.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Eduardo César  
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## DISSERTAÇÃO

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## **Contaminação microbiológica e avaliação de métodos de higienização de panos de limpeza utilizados em serviços de alimentação**

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### **RESUMO**

Panos de limpeza têm sido considerados importantes fontes de contaminação cruzada, contudo seu uso continua muito freqüente em serviços de alimentação. O objetivo desse trabalho foi avaliar a contaminação e multiplicação microbiana, além de dois procedimentos de higienização de panos de limpeza. Em uma primeira etapa, 35 panos de limpeza foram coletados em serviços de alimentação da grande Porto Alegre, RS/Brasil e foram submetidos à quantificação de bactérias totais, coliformes e *Staphylococcus* coagulase positiva, aqui chamado de *Staphylococcus aureus* presuntivos. Os panos foram lavados manualmente e desinfetados por dois métodos, separadamente: a) fervura em água potável por 15 minutos e b) imersão em solução clorada a 200ppm, por 15 minutos, sendo enxaguados logo após. Os resultados demonstraram que as contagens de bactérias totais variaram de  $2,0 \times 10^4$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> até  $1,0 \times 10^8$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>, com média de  $9,1 \times 10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. A contaminação por coliformes foi de  $4,4 \times 10^2$  a  $1,6 \times 10^7$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>, sendo que 40% das amostras apresentou contagens de aproximadamente  $10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. Quantidades de *S. aureus* presuntivos variaram de  $1,0 \times 10^4$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> a  $2,8 \times 10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>, com média de  $4,6 \times 10^5$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. De modo geral, panos desinfetados pelos dois métodos demonstraram reduções significativas ( $p < 0,05$ ) do número de microrganismos, as quais foram de aproximadamente 5 ciclos logarítmicos. Em uma segunda etapa, panos contendo diferentes quantidades de matéria orgânica (0%, 1%, 5% e 10% de albumina bovina) foram contaminados com *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05, *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972, *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 e *Shigella sonnei* CC07 e incubados por 1h, 2h, 3h e 4h, a 30 °C. A multiplicação foi avaliada por métodos microbiológicos e por bioluminescência gerada por ATP. Uma bactéria recombinante, ampicilina-resistente (HSα *E. coli*) foi utilizada para avaliar o potencial de dispersão de panos. Os resultados demonstraram que até duas horas de incubação não houve multiplicação expressiva de todos os microrganismos avaliados, no entanto, em três horas a maioria apresentou leve aumento da população. Uma exceção foi a *S. Enteritidis* que apresentou multiplicação significativamente maior ( $p < 0,05$ ). Após quatro horas de incubação, todos os microrganismos apresentaram multiplicação significativa. A bioluminescência confirmou esses resultados e também demonstrou que diferentes quantidades de matéria orgânica não interferiram na multiplicação microbiana nas primeiras 3 a 4 horas. O experimento da dispersão bacteriana demonstrou que um pano contaminado com  $10^4$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> foi capaz de transferir aproximadamente  $10^2$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de bactérias para uma superfície de aço inoxidável. Baseado nesses resultados, pode-se concluir que panos de limpeza utilizados em serviços de alimentação apresentavam nível elevado de contaminação, porém se adequadamente lavados e desinfetados, suas contagens podem ser significativamente reduzidas. Além disso, sugere-se que panos adequadamente desinfetados sejam utilizados por aproximadamente duas horas, não ultrapassando o período de três horas.

**Palavras-chave: panos de limpeza, contaminação cruzada e desinfecção.**  
**Microbial contamination and evaluation of two disinfection methods of cleaning cloths used in food services**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Cleaning cloths have been considered as important cause of cross-contamination, however its use remains frequent in food services. The objective of this study was to evaluate microbial contamination and multiplication, as well as two disinfection methods of cleaning cloths. In a first step of this work, samples ( $n=35$ ) were collected in food services of Porto Alegre City, RS/Brazil and quantified for microbial contamination. Results indicated total aerobic counts varying from  $2.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> up to  $1.0 \times 10^8$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, with mean numbers of  $9.1 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. Coliform contamination varied from  $4.4 \times 10^2$  up to  $1.6 \times 10^7$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> per cloth, and 40 % of the samples presented counts around  $10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, while presumptive *S. aureus* ranged from  $1.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> up to  $2.8 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, with mean numbers of  $4.6 \times 10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. The cleaning cloths were disinfected in boiling water for 15 minutes and with 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15 minutes, separately, demonstrating significant reductions ( $p < 0.05$ ) of approximately 5 log. In a second step of this study, cloths containing 0 %, 1 %, 5%, and 10% of organic matter (bovine albumin) were contaminated with *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05, *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972, *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 and *Shigella sonnei* CC07, and were incubated for 1 h, 2 h, 3 h, and 4 h, at 30 °C. Microbial multiplication was evaluated by bacterial counts and ATP bioluminescence, and an ampicillin-resistant recombinant HS<sub>d</sub> *E. coli* was used as a pathogen surrogate to investigate the potential of microbial cloth dispersion. The results demonstrate that until 2 hours of storage all strains did not present expressive growth. In 3 hours of storage the majority of the microorganisms showed slightly development, being that *S. Enteritidis* grown significantly better than other strains. In 4 hours of incubation all microorganisms demonstrate significant growth ( $p < 0.05$ ). ATP bioluminescence confirmed the microbial count results and also demonstrates that different amounts of organic matter did not interfere with the bacterial multiplication at the first 3 to 4 hours of incubation. The dispersion experiment indicated that a cleaning cloth contaminated with  $10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> was able to spread approximately  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> recombinant *E. coli* onto a stainless steel surface. Based on these results it was possible to conclude that cleaning cloths used in food services were very contaminated, however adequate sanitation procedures could reduce significantly its microbial contamination. We suggested that an appropriate period of time to use disinfected cleaning cloths is around 2 hours, not exceeding 3 hours of usage.

**Keywords:** Cleaning cloths, cross-contamination, disinfection.

## **LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS**

ATP: Adenosine Triphosphate  
BHI: Brain Heart Infusion  
BP: Baird Parker  
DDA: Doença Diarréica Aguda  
DVS: Divisão de Vigilância Sanitária  
DTA: Doenças Transmitidas por Alimentos  
FDA: Food and Drug Administration  
GMP: Good Manufacturing Practices  
ICTA: Instituto de Ciência e Tecnologia de Alimentos  
LB: Luria-Bertini  
MDDA/MS: Monitorização de Doenças Diarréicas Agudas do Ministério da Saúde  
OMS: Organização Mundial da Saúde  
PCA: Plate Count Agar  
RJ: Rio de Janeiro  
RLU: Relative Luminescence Units  
RS: Rio Grande do Sul  
SHRBS: Sindicato dos Hotéis, Restaurantes, Bares e Similares  
SIERC: Sindicato das Empresas de Refeições Coletivas  
Sindpoa: Sindicato de Hotelaria e Gastronomia de Porto Alegre  
SSOP: Sanitarian Standard Operation Procedures  
TAC: Total Aerobic Counts  
UFC: Unidade Formadora de Colônia  
UK: United Kingdom  
UFRGS: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul  
USA: United States of America  
VRBA: Violet Red Brilliant Agar

## LISTA DE FIGURAS

### **Artigo 1**

TABLE 1. Total Aerobic Counts (TAC), coliforms and presumptive <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> contamination of cleaning cloths sampled in food services.....	44
TABLE 2. Total Aerobic Counts (TAC), coliforms, and presumptive <i>S. aureus</i> contamination cleaning cloths sampled in food services after disinfection by boiling water and 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15 minutes .....	46
FIGURE 1. Frequencies of Total Aerobic Counts (TAC) in cleaning cloths collected in food services.....	48
FIGURE 2. Frequencies of coliform counts in cleaning cloths collected in food services.....	48
FIGURE 3. Frequencies of presumptive <i>S. aureus</i> counts in cleaning cloth collected in food services.....	49

### **Artigo 2**

FIGURE 1. <i>Salmonella Enteritidis</i> 3091/05 (♦), <i>Shigella sonnei</i> CC07(■) <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC 25923 (●) and <i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC 25972 growth in cotton cloth containing 1 % bovine albumin at 30 °C .....	66
FIGURE 2. <i>Salmonella Enteritidis</i> 3091/05 (♦), <i>Shigella sonnei</i> CC07(■) <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC 25923 (●) and <i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC 25972 growth in disposable cloth containing 1 % bovine albumin at 30 oC.....	66
FIGURE 3. ATP bioluminescence originated from surfaces rubbed with contaminated cotton cloths containing 1 % (♦), 5 % (■), and 10 % (▲) of bovine albumin solution after different periods of incubation at 30 °C.....	67
TABLE 1. Recombinant <i>E. coli</i> dispersion present in cotton cloths rubbed in stainless steel surface.....	68

## SUMÁRIO

CAPÍTULO 1 .....	10
1.1    INTRODUÇÃO .....	11
1.2    OBJETIVO GERAL.....	13
1.2.1    Objetivos específicos.....	13
1.3    REVISÃO BIBLIOGRÁFICA .....	14
1.3.1    Doenças Transmitidas por Alimentos (DTA) no Mundo.....	14
1.3.2    DTA no Rio Grande do Sul.....	15
1.3.3    DTA e Serviços de Alimentação.....	16
1.3.4    Serviços de Alimentação e a utilização de panos de limpeza .....	17
1.3.5    Contaminação dos panos de limpeza.....	18
1.3.6    Procedimentos de higienização.....	19
CAPÍTULO 2 .....	22
2.1    RESULTADOS .....	23
2.1.1    Artigo 1 .....	23
2.1.1.1    Microbial contamination of cleaning cloths used in food services and evaluation of two disinfection methods .....	23
2.1.2    Artigo 2 .....	50
2.1.2.1    Evaluation of bacterial multiplication in cleaning cloths containing deferent quantities of organic matter .....	50
CAPÍTULO 3 .....	69
3.1    DISCUSSÃO GERAL .....	70
REFERÊNCIAS.....	76

## CAPÍTULO 1

## 1.1 INTRODUÇÃO

A incidência de Doenças Transmitidas por Alimentos (DTA) vem aumentando em todo o mundo, ocasionando graves problemas de saúde pública e importantes perdas econômicas.

No Brasil, de acordo com o Sistema de Monitorização de Doenças Diarréicas Agudas do Ministério da Saúde (MDDA/MS), somente em 2004, ocorreram cerca de 2.400.000 casos de DTA. Dados do Sistema de Informações Hospitalares (SIH) demonstraram que no período de 1999 e 2004 houve mais de 3.400.000 internações hospitalares causadas pela ingestão de alimentos contaminados, sendo que no período de 1999 a 2002 ocorreram, em média, 6.320 óbitos ao ano (SECRETARIA DE VIGILÂNCIA EM SAÚDE, 2005).

No Rio Grande do Sul (RS) foram notificados 3.200 surtos com mais de 286.000 pessoas expostas, no período de 1980 a 2006 (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, RELATÓRIOS ANUAIS DVS). Dentre os principais fatores identificados para ocorrência de DTA, pode-se citar a manutenção dos alimentos em temperatura inadequada, manipulação inadequada de alimentos, higienização deficiente de utensílios e equipamentos e contaminação cruzada (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, RELATÓRIOS ANUAIS DVS). Embora grande parte dos surtos investigados no RS venha ocorrendo em residências, uma porcentagem expressiva de surtos tem ocorrido em serviços de alimentação, os quais muitas vezes apresentam condições bastante precárias para a produção segura de alimentos.

Assim como em outros estados do Brasil, no RS o uso de panos de limpeza nos serviços de alimentação é bastante comum. Esses panos têm sido utilizados, muitas vezes, como auxiliares nos processos de higienização, porém podem ser fonte expressiva de contaminação cruzada devido a sua capacidade de transferir microrganismos às mãos de manipuladores e superfícies que entram em contato com alimentos. Além disso, o uso desses panos por tempo prolongado, sem procedimento correto de higienização, pode ocasionar a multiplicação microbiana, aumentando ainda mais os riscos da contaminação cruzada.

Ainda que diversas legislações brasileiras não recomendem a utilização de panos em serviços de alimentação (BRASIL, 2004; SÃO PAULO, 2006; RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 2006) esses estabelecimentos continuam utilizando extensivamente panos de limpeza, argumentando sobre sua alta utilidade e falta de substitutivos com a mesma eficiência.

Baseado nestes fatos, o presente estudo teve como objetivos os em seguida apresentados.

## 1.2 OBJETIVO GERAL

Avaliar a contaminação microbiológica de panos de limpeza utilizados em serviços de alimentação e a efetividade de métodos de higienização.

### 1.2.1 Objetivos específicos

- Quantificar o número de bactérias heterotróficas totais, coliformes e *Staphylococcus coagulase* positivos em panos utilizados em serviços de alimentação.
- Avaliar a multiplicação de *Salmonella Enteritidis*, *Shigella sonnei*, *Escherichia coli* e *Staphylococcus aureus* em panos de limpeza com diferentes quantidades de matéria orgânica.
- Avaliar a dispersão em aço inoxidável de *Escherichia coli* recombinante presente em pano de algodão.
- Avaliar a capacidade de redução das contagens microbianas de panos submetidos à limpeza por esfregaçāo e desinfecção por água fervente ou solução de hipoclorito de sódio.

## 1.3 REVISÃO BIBLIOGRÁFICA

### 1.3.1 Doenças Transmitidas por Alimentos (DTA) no Mundo

Estimativas realizadas em diferentes países apontam um aumento progressivo do número de casos registrados de DTA causados por patógenos já bastante conhecidos ou emergentes (NORRUNG; BUNCIC, 2008; SOFOS, 2008). Esse aumento tem sido justificado pela melhoria dos sistemas de vigilância e informação (KAFERSTEIN; ABDUSSALAM, 1999), aumento no comércio global e viagens, mudanças devido a novas tecnologias na produção de alimentos, mudanças nos hábitos alimentares e emergência de novos patógenos (COLLINS, 1997). Segundo a Organização Mundial da Saúde (OMS), anualmente ocorrem cerca de 1,8 milhões de mortes devido a DTA, sendo que os principais afetados são crianças e lactentes dos países em desenvolvimento (LEITNER, 2004). Somente nos Estados Unidos foram estimados entre 6 e 33 milhões de casos de DTA por ano, com cerca de 5.000 casos resultando em morte (MEAD et al., 1999). Nesse mesmo país foram estimados gastos de cerca de 6 milhões de dólares anuais para o tratamento das DTA, porém estas cifras não incluem as perdas geradas nos sistemas de produção e comércio (LEITNER, 2004). Na Inglaterra foram estimados cerca de 9,4 milhões de casos de DTA por ano, sendo que apenas 1 em cada 136 casos foi notificado aos serviços de saúde pública (WHEELER et al., 1999). Segundo os mesmos autores, no Reino Unido, no início da década de 80 foram registrados 15.000 casos, sendo que em 1996 foram mais de 60.000 casos registrados.

O sistema de Monitorização de Doenças Diarréicas Agudas (MDDA), do Ministério da Saúde brasileiro, informou que ocorreram 2.395.485 casos de DDA (doença diarréica aguda), no Brasil, somente em 2004. Os dados do Sistema de Informações Hospitalares (SIH), do Ministério da Saúde, demonstraram que, de 1999 a 2004, houve 3.410.048 internações por DTA, com uma média de 568.341 casos por ano. As regiões Norte e Nordeste foram as que apresentaram as maiores taxas de incidência de DTA (SECRETARIA DE VIGILÂNCIA EM SAÚDE, 2005).

Sabe-se, no entanto, que no Brasil os dados epidemiológicos sobre DTA são difíceis de conseguir, uma vez que os serviços de Vigilância Sanitária são organizados de forma praticamente independente nos estados e municípios e apresentam dificuldades expressivas em termos de pessoal técnico disponível, equipamentos, laboratórios de apoio e sistemas informatizados.

### **1.3.2 DTA no Rio Grande do Sul**

O Rio Grande do Sul é um dos poucos estados brasileiros onde há dados epidemiológicos sobre DTA há mais de 20 anos. Esses dados, embora possam não refletir com exatidão a realidade das DTA devido ao problema da sub-notificação, são bastante valiosos para que sejam adotadas medidas de controle e prevenção.

Entre os anos de 1980 a 2006 foram notificados 3.200 surtos com 286.314 pessoas expostas, sendo que no ano de 2000, a cidade Porto Alegre, capital do RS, notificou 32,6% do total de surtos registrados. Dentre as principais causas dos surtos alimentares foram destacados os seguintes fatores: 1) manutenção dos alimentos em temperatura ambiente por mais de 2 horas; 2) manutenção sob refrigeração em temperatura inadequada; 3) manipulação inadequada e higiene deficiente de equipamentos e utensílios; 4) contaminação cruzada (SECRETARIA DE VIGILÂNCIA EM SAÚDE, 2005).

A maioria dos casos de salmonelose de 1997 a 2000 ocorreu na primavera e início do verão, ao contrário do que ocorre em outros locais, onde a maior parte dos casos ocorre principalmente no verão. A faixa etária mais envolvida compreendeu pessoas com idades entre 15 e 50 anos, as quais podem ser consideradas como a parte da população que é economicamente ativa e que realiza suas refeições fora de casa. Os agentes causais mais frequentemente isolados dos alimentos envolvidos foram a *Salmonella* (32,2%), seguida pelo *Staphylococcus aureus* (12,7%), e coliformes de origem fecal (8,9%) no período de 1987 a 1998 (COSTALUNGA; TONDO, 2002; SILVEIRA; TONDO, 2006).

Os alimentos principalmente envolvidos em salmoneloses foram classificados como alimentos preparados (principalmente maionese caseira) e produtos de confeitoraria, evidenciando a importância da manipulação e hábitos higiênicos adequados nos estabelecimentos de preparo. Embora 32% dos surtos notificados entre 1987 a 1998 tenham ocorrido dentro das residências gaúchas, 27% dos surtos ocorreram em estabelecimentos como lanchonetes e restaurantes comerciais (COSTALUNGA; TONDO, 2002), demonstrando a importância do controle em serviços de alimentação.

### **1.3.3 DTA e Serviços de Alimentação**

Griffith (2000) estimou que, de modo geral, 70% dos surtos de DTA ocorrem em serviços de alimentação, sendo que 88% destes surtos ocorrem em restaurantes, 44% em hotéis, 23% em bares/pubs e 11% em serviços de *catering*. Dentre as falhas mais freqüentes nos serviços de alimentação, as quais podem resultar em DTA, pode-se citar: 1) preparação dos alimentos muito antes de seu consumo, ocasionando condições de tempo e temperaturas apropriadas para o desenvolvimento de microrganismos; 2) cocção inadequada e insuficiente para inativar microrganismos patogênicos; 3) manipuladores de alimentos infectados ou colonizados por microrganismos patogênicos. 4) superfícies de equipamentos, utensílios e objetos contaminados, os quais possam ser fontes de contaminação cruzada.

Outros fatores podem contribuir com a ocorrência de surtos de DTA em serviços de alimentação. Como exemplo, pode-se citar que grande parte dos serviços de alimentação possui administração familiar e não conta com um profissional técnico capacitado para os controles necessários à produção segura de alimentos. Aliado a isso, frequentemente há o desconhecimento com relação às causas de DTA e aos perigos relacionados à contaminação de alimentos por parte dos proprietários e funcionários destes estabelecimentos.

Na região de Porto Alegre existem mais de 2.500 estabelecimentos comerciais que produzem refeições. Destes, 58,2% são micro-empresas, 37,3% pequenas empresas e somente 4,5% são avaliados como médias e grandes empresas de acordo como o faturamento anual (Sindicado dos Hotéis,

Restaurantes, Bares e Similares de Porto Alegre – SHRBS). Dentre eles, 53,3% são classificados como pizzarias, restaurantes, galeterias, bares e restaurantes, cantinas, churrascarias, restaurantes e churrascarias, buffet e buffet a Kg. Destes, 79,9% permanecem abertos o dia todo e 48,2% funcionam sete dias por semana. A média de refeições oferecidas é de 222 para pizzarias, restaurantes, galeterias, bares e restaurantes, cantinas e churrascarias e 185 para restaurantes tipo buffet e buffet a quilo. O número médio de funcionários por empresa é igual a oito, os quais nem sempre são adequadamente treinados para as funções que desempenham, demonstrando uma das principais dificuldades do setor que é a falta de profissionais qualificados. Segundo dados do Sindicado dos Hotéis, Restaurantes, Bares e Similares de Porto Alegre - SHRBS, a principal dificuldade relatada por esses estabelecimentos é a falta de recursos financeiros, o que se reflete diretamente nos investimentos em relação à segurança dos alimentos.

Os dados do Sindicato das Empresas de Refeições Coletivas (SIERC) relatam que, no Rio Grande do Sul, em 2004, havia 81 empresas no setor, as quais foram responsáveis por aproximadamente 320.000 refeições diárias, 9000 empregos diretos, 24.000 empregos indiretos e um faturamento médio mensal de R\$ 28.000,000. Com base no Conselho de Nutrição do RS, em 2005, havia 687 cozinhas industriais no Estado, preparando diferentes quantidades de refeições diárias conforme sua estrutura e demanda das empresas clientes. Somente na região metropolitana de Porto Alegre há mais de 40 cozinhas industriais.

#### **1.3.4 Serviços de Alimentação e a utilização de panos de limpeza**

A utilização de panos de limpeza em serviços de alimentação é uma prática habitual, principalmente devido às condições físicas dos estabelecimentos, que não permitem a existência de pontos de água em todos os locais, dificultando os procedimentos de limpeza e desinfecção. Aliado a isso, há o fato de alguns equipamentos (fatiadores de frios, mesas e bancadas de trabalho, ammassadeiras, entre outros) não poderem ser removidos ou

enxaguados com água corrente, sendo a utilização de panos a única maneira de higienização dos mesmos. Outro fator importante a ser considerado é que nem sempre existe uma política de separação de panos de acordo com a superfície, atividade ou local a ser limpo, resultando que o mesmo pano seja utilizado em diferentes atividades e podendo se tornar uma expressiva fonte de contaminação cruzada (WORSFOLD, 2001).

Também pode-se ressaltar o fato de que muitas vezes os funcionários dos serviços de alimentação não têm experiência na área e também não recebem treinamento em relação às Boas Práticas ou atividades que irão executar, facilitando a contaminação de panos e, consequentemente, a contaminação cruzada.

Outro fator que pode ser destacado é que não existe, em muitos estabelecimentos, um procedimento de troca desses panos, os quais são utilizados constantemente, por tempo indeterminado. Aliado a isso, há a falta de um procedimento de higienização adequado desses panos, o qual deveria contemplar as etapas de limpeza e desinfecção.

### **1.3.5 Contaminação dos panos de limpeza**

Os panos de limpeza são agentes potenciais de disseminação de patógenos alimentares nas diferentes áreas de um serviço de alimentação, principalmente devido às condições em que estes são mantidos, ou seja, muitas vezes, úmidos, com resíduos de alimentos e em temperatura ambiente. Dessa forma, os níveis de contaminação dos panos podem ser bastante altos. Além disso, a estrutura de um pano de algodão, os quais são muito utilizados, permite que resíduos orgânicos, assim como bactérias, fiquem facilmente aderidos aos mesmos, por isso, a contaminação de panos utilizados em serviços de alimentação em geral é alta (KUSUMANINGRUM et al., 2003; SCOTT; BLOOMFIELD, 1990a; DAVIS et al., 1968).

Com exemplo disso, Scott e Bloomfield (1990 a, b) demonstraram contagens de  $10^2$  a  $10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano, sugerindo que esses são fontes

importantes de contaminação em uma cozinha. Scott e Bloomfield (1993) relataram que após três horas de uso em atividades de preparo de alimentos, os panos apresentaram populações microbianas em níveis incontáveis. Em outro trabalho, Bloomfield e Scott (1997) evidenciaram o potencial de dispersão de bactérias e vírus através de panos, mãos e o contato de mãos com alimentos. Outro estudo ainda demonstrou que os panos, quando não adequadamente manipulados e higienizados, podem atuar como reservatórios de bactérias e dispersar contaminantes (SCOTT; BLOOMFIELD, 1982).

Cogan et al. (2002) relataram que panos utilizados para limpar superfícies onde havia sido preparado frango cru, apresentaram uma contaminação inicial de  $4,2 \times 10^5$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> e que, após armazenamento por uma noite, as contagens de microrganismos aumentaram para  $6,6 \times 10^8$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. Foi demonstrado que panos não adicionados de componentes antibacterianos utilizados para limpar superfícies contaminadas, apresentaram altas contagens de bactérias (KUSUMANINGRUM et al., 2002). Estudos prévios relatam que durante o preparo de alimentos, utilizando panos para limpeza, estes tornaram-se bastante contaminados (SCOTT; BLOOMFIELD, 1992; TEBBUTT, 1986; MENDES et. al, 1978;), especialmente aqueles que não são descartáveis (SCOTT; BLOOMFIELD, 1992). Outros estudos também relatam o potencial de dispersão de bactérias via panos (HILTON; AUSTIN, 2000; RUSIN et al., 1998; ZHAO et al., 1998; BLOOMFIELD; SCOTT, 1997; JOSEPHSON et al., 1997; DE BOER; HAHNÉ, 1990).

### **1.3.6 Procedimentos de higienização**

Grande parte dos serviços de alimentação não adota procedimentos de higienização necessários para a eliminação de contaminação dos panos, fazendo, em alguns casos, apenas a lavagem com detergente e enxágüe com água corrente. Em outros, somente o enxágüe com água é realizado, não sendo utilizado nenhum método de desinfecção. Scott e Bloomfield (1990b) demonstraram que a redução da contaminação de panos através da lavagem com detergente, seguido de enxágüe com água é insignificante, porém Cogan

et al. (2001) comprovaram que este procedimento de limpeza (lavagem com solução de detergente, seguido de enxágüe com água corrente) permite certa redução na contaminação inicial de panos utilizados nos procedimentos de limpeza de superfícies e equipamentos.

A lavagem e higienização de panos é certamente uma medida que pode colaborar com a prevenção de DTA, contudo, os métodos a serem utilizados devem ser factíveis e acessíveis a esses estabelecimentos. Kusumaningrum et al. (2003) relataram que o hipoclorito de sódio tem sido amplamente utilizado nos Estados Unidos devido à sua atividade bactericida em baixas concentrações. Porém os mesmos autores observaram reduções de 2 log na população de *Samonella* e apenas 1 log na população de *Staphylococcus aureus* a uma concentração de 800 ppm de hipoclorito de sódio em panos artificialmente contaminados e sem adição de matéria orgânica. Ainda no mesmo estudo, em panos utilizados em casas, houve uma redução de aproximadamente 4 log da população microbiana total, utilizando solução de hipoclorito de sódio a 2400 ppm por 15 a 60 minutos. Conforme descrito por Bloomfield e Scott (1996) a possibilidade de panos serem reservatórios e dispersores de microrganismos é alta, sendo alto o risco de causar infecção e a necessidade de desinfecção dos mesmos é constante durante e após o uso.

No Brasil, é recomendada a utilização de solução de hipoclorito a 200 ppm, por 15 minutos, para desinfecção de equipamentos, utensílios, frutas e hortaliças (SILVA JR., 2005), porém para higienização de panos os dados da bibliografia científica não têm recomendado essa concentração (BLOOMFIELD; SCOTT, 1997; SCOTT; BLOOMFIELD, 1990b).

Ikawa e Rossen (1999) e Parnes (1997) descreveram que a fervura dos panos por alguns minutos pode ser uma alternativa para a redução da contaminação bacteriana. Esse procedimento, além de ser de fácil execução e apresentar baixo custo, tem a vantagem de não deixar cheiro nos panos.

Tanto a utilização de soluções de hipoclorito de sódio como a fervura de panos em água potável parecem ser procedimentos adequados e possíveis para serem executados em serviços de alimentação. Por esse motivo, ambos

os métodos são objetivo de análise do presente estudo. Além disso, uma vez determinada a melhor maneira de reduzir a contaminação microbiana de panos, outra questão adquire semelhante importância: qual o período de tempo que tais panos podem ser utilizados sem que ocorra multiplicação de microrganismos.

## CAPÍTULO 2

## **2 RESULTADOS**

Os resultados deste estudo são apresentados na forma de artigos científicos. Cada subtítulo deste capítulo corresponde a um dos artigos com sua formatação de acordo com as orientações das revistas científicas escolhidas para a submissão.

### **2.1 Artigo 1**

#### **2.1.1 Microbial contamination of cleaning cloths used in food services and evaluation of two disinfection methods**

**Microbial contamination of cleaning cloths used in food services and  
evaluation of two disinfection methods**

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1   **Abstract**

2              Cleaning cloths have been considered as an important cause of cross-  
3   contamination, however its use remains frequent in food services worldwide.  
4   The aims of the present work were to evaluate microbial contamination of  
5   cleaning cloths collected in food services and also to evaluate two disinfection  
6   methods. Samples (n=35) were collected in 13 food services of Porto Alegre  
7   City, Southern Brazil. Results indicated total aerobic counts varying from  $2.0 \times$   
8    $10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> up to  $1.0 \times 10^8$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, with mean numbers of  $9.1 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>.  
9   Coliform contamination varied from  $4.4 \times 10^2$  up to  $1.6 \times 10^7$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> per cloth,  
10   and 40% of the samples presented counts around  $10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, while  
11   presumptive *S. aureus* ranged from  $1.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> up to  $2.8 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>,  
12   with mean numbers of  $4.6 \times 10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. No correlation was identified among  
13   the number of daily meal and contamination levels, once counts were very  
14   variable. The cleaning cloths were hand washed and disinfected in boiling water  
15   for 15 minutes and with 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15 minutes,  
16   separately, demonstrating significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reductions of approximately 5  
17   log. Overall, boiling method demonstrated to be slightly more efficient than  
18   sodium hypochlorite solution. Based on the results it was possible to conclude  
19   that cleaning cloths used in food services could be very contaminated, however  
20   adequate sanitation procedures could be easily carried out, reducing  
21   significantly the microbial contamination.

22

23   Keywords: cleaning cloths, cross-contamination, disinfection, foodborne  
24   diseases, contamination, food services.

25

26      **Introduction**

27      The incidence of reported foodborne diseases is increasing unacceptably  
28      in many countries (Norrung and Buncic, 2008; Sofos, 2008), including in  
29      Brazil (Oliveira et al., 2005). The magnitude of this problem is bigger than  
30      reported by official surveillance services, once the majority of the outbreaks  
31      are not informed. According to Jackson et al. (2007) less than 2% of the  
32      cases of foodborne diseases acute gastroenteritis in the community are  
33      detected by current surveillance/reporting process, and food services as  
34      bars, restaurants and hotels are among the most involved locals where  
35      outbreaks occurred. Many authors have indicated improper food  
36      preparation, inadequate storage or cooking, and cross-contamination as the  
37      main causes of foodborne diseases (Walker et al., 2003a; Olsen et al., 2000;  
38      Simone et al., 1997; Bean et al., 1996; Scott, 1996). Cleaning cloths have  
39      been identified as an important potential cause of cross-contamination, once  
40      they could be very contaminated, representing a significant source of  
41      biological hazards. Scott and Bloomfield (1990b) have demonstrated that  
42      when contaminated cleaning cloths are applied to surfaces, organisms are  
43      invariably transferred to the surfaces and hands of the user in sufficient  
44      numbers to cause foodborne infection. The contamination by food leftovers,  
45      and the high humidity that cleaning cloths may contain could easily promote  
46      microbial multiplication. Confirming this, different kinds and counts of  
47      microorganisms have been found in cleaning cloths used in private homes  
48      and commercial food services (Cogan et al., 1999; De Boer and Hahne,  
49      1990; De Wit, 1979). Based on these facts, the use of cleaning cloths is  
50      generally not recommended by Good Manufacturing Practices regulations,

51 however they remain very used in several food services. Among the main  
52 factors that may contribute to their frequent usage in such food  
53 establishments are the impossibility to remove many equipments to carry out  
54 cleaning procedures due to their weight, the presence of electric  
55 components which make impossible the rinse under running water and also  
56 the lower cost of cotton cleaning cloths when compared to disposable cloths.

57 Based on this, the present study aimed to evaluate the microbial  
58 contamination of cleaning cloths used in food services and also to evaluate  
59 two disinfection methods of these cloths.

60

## 61 **Material and Methods**

62

### 63 **Sampling collection**

64 Thirty five used cotton cleaning cloths were collected from the kitchens of  
65 13 food services, being that 10 were commercial restaurants and other three  
66 were industrial restaurants localized in Porto Alegre City, Rio Grande do Sul,  
67 Southernmost State of Brazil. Porto Alegre City was chosen because 45.8% of  
68 the restaurants of the metropolitan area, composed by 9 cities, are located  
69 there. The number of food services included in the sampling collection was  
70 determined based on the accessibility to these establishments, i. e. restaurants  
71 that agreed to participate in the present study and that presented common  
72 characteristics of food services found in the region. The type and characteristics  
73 of the restaurants were chosen based on the reports of the Sindicato de  
74 Hotelaria e Gastronomia de Porto Alegre (Sindpoa), who demonstrated that  
75 74.9% of the commercial restaurants were open all day, seven days in a week,

76 with Friday being the most busy day, and serving around 222 daily meals. All of  
77 them have implemented at least basic Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)  
78 procedures, and the majority presented GMP manual implemented or GMP  
79 certification. All the industrial restaurants sampled presented GMP manual and  
80 Sanitarian Standard Operation Procedures (SSOP) implemented and had a  
81 nutricionist controlling the production procedures. One of the industrial  
82 restaurant prepared approximately 7000 daily meals, while the other two  
83 prepared around 750 and 320 daily meals. Previously to the collection,  
84 responsible for each food services were contacted and asked for their  
85 agreement with cleaning cloth sampling collection. After the agreement,  
86 cleaning cloths were collected during work time of food services in a non  
87 informed visit to the establishment. Cleaning cloths were transported for the  
88 laboratory of Food Microbiology of Instituto de Ciência e Tecnologia de  
89 Alimentos/UFRGS under controlled temperature conditions inside a sterile  
90 plastic bag. Sampling was conducted during the period of April to December of  
91 2006, including winter and summer time.

92

### 93 **Microbial quantification**

94 Before analysis, the cleaning cloths were first asseptically size  
95 standardized (35cm x 70cm) using a disinfected scissor and gloved hands. After  
96 that the cloths where cut in two equal pieces. One of the pieces (35 x 17.5cm)  
97 were placed into 500 ml of 0.1% peptone water (Merck, RJ, Brazil), and  
98 vigorously agitated for 10 min. A volume of 1 ml of the homogenate was added  
99 to 9 ml of 0.1% peptone water for compose 1/10 dilution and this procedure was  
100 repeated at least five times. Samples of 20 µl of the decimal dilutions were

101 plated on Plate Count Agar (PCA, Merck), Baird Parker egg yolk-tellurite Agar  
102 (BP, Merck), and Violet Red Brilliant Agar (VRBA, Merck) for the enumeration of  
103 Total Aerobic Counts (TAC), presumptive *Staphylococcus aureus* (grey/black  
104 shiny colonies with or without lipase activity) confirmed by the coagulase test  
105 according to FDA (1992) and presumptive coliforms (red, surrounded by reddish  
106 precipitation zones with 1 to 2mm colonies), respectively, by the method  
107 described by Silva (1997). Plates were incubated at 30°C, for 24 – 48 h, and  
108 microbial enumerations were carried out in duplicates. Results were expressed  
109 as cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> of cloth.

110

### 111 **Evaluation of disinfection methods**

112 Cleaning cloths pieces (35 x 17.5cm) that were not used in microbial  
113 enumeration experiments were divided in two equal pieces (17.5 x 17.5cm) to  
114 disinfection procedures. The cloths were hand washed for approximately two  
115 minutes, by the same person, using a commercial neutral detergent purchased  
116 from retail supermarket. After washed, the cloths were rinsed in potable water  
117 and then one half was boiled in water for 15 minutes and the other half was  
118 placed into a 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15 minutes, followed by  
119 rinse in potable water.

120 After sanitization the cloths were placed into 250 ml of 0.1% peptone water and  
121 vigorously agitated. A volume of 20 µl of the homogenate was directly  
122 inoculated on Petry dishes containing PCA, BP, and VRBA for the enumeration  
123 of TAC, presumptive *Staphylococcus aureus*, and presumptive coliforms,  
124 respectively. All the counts were performed in duplicates after incubation at  
125 30°C, for 24 - 48 h. Results were expressed as cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> of cloth.

126     **Statistical analysis**

127

128       Counts were performed in duplicates and submitted to variance analysis  
129       (ANOVA) of Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corp. Redmond, WA). Differences were  
130       considered significant at  $P < 0.05$  using a two-sample Student's *t*-test.

131

132     **Results**

133

134       The microbial contamination of the cleaning cloths evaluated in the present  
135       work was very variable, however expressive counts were observed in all  
136       samples. As can be seen on Table 1, the TAC indicated contaminations varying  
137       from  $2.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> up to  $1.0 \times 10^8$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, with mean numbers of  $9.1 \times 10^6$   
138       cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. The majority, i. e. 46% (16/35), of the cleaning cloths presented counts  
139       of  $10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, followed by samples with  $10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> (28%), and  $10^7$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>  
140       (20%). Only one cloth demonstrated contamination levels of  $10^8$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> and  
141       other presented  $10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. As expected, all samples showed some microbial  
142       contamination and it was not possible to detect a clear correlation between the  
143       number of daily meals produced by food services and levels of contamination of  
144       the cleaning cloths. Figure 1 demonstrates the frequencies of TAC in the  
145       cleaning cloths sampled.

146       The presumptive coliform contamination in the cleaning cloths varied from  
147        $4.4 \times 10^2$  up to  $1.6 \times 10^7$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> per cloth, being that 40% (14/35) of the  
148       samples presented counts around  $10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, 31% (11/35) presented  $10^5$   
149       cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, and 9% (3/35) demonstrated  $10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. Only one sample presented  
150       counts around  $10^7$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> and one around  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> (3%). The mean

151 contamination was  $2.9 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, and in 14% (05/35) of the cloths  
152 presumptive coliforms were not detected.

153 Contaminations with presumptive *S. aureus* ranged from  $1.0 \times 10^4$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>  
154 up to  $2.8 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, with mean numbers of  $4.6 \times 10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. Among the 35  
155 cleaning cloths analysed, 23% (8/35) were contaminated with approximately  $10^4$   
156 cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> presumptive *S. aureus*. The same percentage (23%) of cloths  
157 demonstrated counts of  $10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. Two cloths (6%) presented counts of  $10^6$   
158 cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. Presumptive *S. aureus* were not detected in 48% (17/35) of the cloths  
159 analysed. Frequencies of presumptive coliforms and presumptive *S. aureus*  
160 found in the cleaning cloths are demonstrated in Figures 2 and 3.

161 In general, it was not possible to identify a clear co-relation among TAC,  
162 presumptive coliforms, and presumptive *S. aureus*. Some samples presenting  
163 high counts of TAC did not presented presumptive coliforms and/or presumptive  
164 *S. aureus* (ex. samples 4, 18, 21, and 31) while in other samples high counts of  
165 the tree types of microorganisms were found.

166 According to Table 2, after disinfection by both procedures, the mean  
167 counts of all the microorganisms evaluated decreased significantly ( $P > 0.05$ ).  
168 Considering the mean numbers of TAC observed in the cloths before sanitation,  
169 the majority of the samples presented approximately 5 log cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> reduction.

170 The cloths boiled in water for 15 minutes presented counts varying from  
171 not detected (ND) up to  $2.3 \times 10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> for TAC, being that only one sample  
172 recorded counts of  $2.3 \times 10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> (sample 11). Among all the samples tested  
173 for TAC, 48% (17/35) presented counts around  $10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, 29% (10/35)  
174 presented counts of approximately  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> and in 20% (7/35)  
175 microorganisms were not detected. From these samples, only two (6%)

176 recorded presumptive coliform counts around  $10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, and in the majority of  
177 the cloths (94%), these microorganisms were not detected. Counts of  
178 presumptive *S. aureus* varied from not detected up to  $7.1 \times 10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, and in  
179 31 samples (89%) presumptive *S. aureus* were not detected.

180 The cloth disinfected with 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15  
181 minutes recorded counts varying from not detected up to  $10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> for TAC.  
182 Only two samples (6%) presented counts with approximately  $10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>  
183 (samples 10 and 11), 8 samples (23%) presented counts around  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>  
184 and 21 samples (60%) presented counts around  $10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>. In five samples  
185 (14%) microorganisms were not detected.

186 After 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite disinfection, the remained  
187 populations of presumptive coliforms varied from not detected up to  $10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>.  
188 Two samples (number 10 and 11) presented counts around  $10^3$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, one  
189 sample (3%) presented counts of  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, 4 samples (11%) presented  
190 counts around  $10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> and in 27 samples (77%) presumptive coliforms were  
191 not detected. Concerning presumptive *S. aureus*, populations varied from not  
192 detected up to  $1.5 \times 10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, being that two samples (6%) presented counts  
193 around  $10^2$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, 6 samples (17%) presented counts around  $10^1$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> and  
194 in 27 samples (77%) these microorganisms were not detected.

195 Comparing general results reached by the two disinfection procedures,  
196 boiling demonstrated higher number of samples where microorganisms were  
197 not detected, suggesting a slightly more efficiency. However, 200 ppm sodium  
198 hypochlorite disinfection also demonstrated efficient microbial reduction in the  
199 majority of samples tested.

200

201     **Discussion**

202         Even though not recommended by several food safety regulations,  
203         cleaning cloths are widely used in food services of many countries, including  
204         Brazil. Reusable cleaning cloths are frequently found in food services, being  
205         used to wipe surfaces, remove food and detergent residues and other cleaning  
206         procedures. It is known that during their usage cleaning cloths could become  
207         heavily contaminated and because of that, they could be considered as  
208         important sources of cross-contamination (Scott and Bloomfield, 1990b;  
209         Tebbutt, 1986; Mackintosh and Hoffmann, 1984). The potential of cloths to  
210         cause cross-contamination is well known (Scott, 1999), and it could be  
211         associated with the frequency of occurrence of potentially harmful  
212         microorganisms and also with the probability of transfer contamination from one  
213         site to another (Bloomfield and Scott, 1996).

214         High contamination of cleaning cloths had been reported by different  
215         authors. As examples, Scott and Bloomfield (1990a, b) have demonstrated  
216         counts of  $10^2$  up to  $10^6$  cfu or more per  $\text{cm}^2$  of cloths, indicating that wet  
217         cleaning cloths, among others, could be source or reservoir of microorganisms.  
218         Davis et al. (1968) also have reported high numbers of microbial contamination  
219         of cloths, which contained up to  $10^8$  bacteria. Kusumaningrum et al. (2003)  
220         have recorded TAC ranging from  $10^8$  to  $10^9$  cfu in cloth samples of  $18 \times 18 \text{ cm}^2$ .  
221         Similar results were verified in our study because TAC varied from  $10^4$  up to  $10^8$   
222         cfu/ $\text{cm}^2$  of cloth. Considering the mean of contamination ( $9.1 \times 10^6$  cfu/ $\text{cm}^2$ ) and  
223         the cloth area ( $70 \times 35 \text{ cm}$ ), a typical cleaning cloth could contain,  
224         approximately  $2.2 \times 10^{10}$  cfu.

225        The wide range of counts demonstrated in our results could be explained  
226    by the several modes of use of the cleaning cloths in food services. At sample  
227    collection, it was not possible to know if the cloths were in use for a short or  
228    long time, and it was not investigated if cloths were sanitized before or during  
229    use. Additionally to diversity of cleaning cloths usage, high contamination  
230    numbers commonly found in cleaning cloths can be explained by their cotton  
231    fiber structure and the frequent presence of organic matter, what can promote  
232    microbial attachment and protection (Kusumaningrum et al., 2003).

233        Coliforms have been suggested as food safety indicators for some foods  
234    (ICMSF, 1986) and they are best employed as a component of a safety  
235    program such as the HACCP (Jay, 2002). According to Gerba (2001) coliforms  
236    and other microorganisms can be used as indicators of microbial hazard in  
237    quantitative microbial risk assessment. Our study recorded mean numbers of  
238    presumptive coliforms in cloths of  $2.9 \times 10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, and in only five samples  
239    they were not detected. These results highlighted the possible presence of  
240    enteral foodborne pathogens in cloths used in food services, suggesting risk of  
241    cross-contamination. The coliform contamination on cloths could be attributed to  
242    several factors as: improper handling of these cloths during food preparation,  
243    contamination by raw products, absence of disinfection procedures, cross-  
244    contamination by food handlers, conserving cloths under room temperature and  
245    sufficient humidity after contamination, which could permit microbial  
246    multiplication. Even, coliforms were highly present in cloths samples analysed,  
247    attention should be given because their presence is not expected in cloths  
248    adequately cleaned. Corroborating the importance of these results, it is

249 important to note that *E. coli* is a coliform that have been involved with many  
250 foodborne diseases (Stopforth et al., 2007).

251 The contamination levels of presumptive *S. aureus* observed in this  
252 study extended across a relative wide range of values, once in several samples  
253 these microorganisms were not detected and in others samples counts reached  
254  $10^6$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup> of magnitude. *S. aureus* is a widespread opportunistic pathogen  
255 that can cause food-borne illnesses (Oulahal et al., 2008) and is a common  
256 inhabitant of human nose, throat and skin as reported by Arbuthnott (1990).

257 This pathogen can produce a heat-stable toxin responsible for cause food  
258 poisoning (Hein et al., 2005). Improper manipulation by personnel was  
259 described by Hatakka et al. (2000) as being the principal factor related with the  
260 presence of *S. aureus* in foods. According to Kusumaningrum (2003) *S. aureus*  
261 can survive in surfaces over 4 days and can be easily transferred to food by  
262 cross-contamination. As a mesophilic microorganism, the room temperature  
263 found in food services kitchens can provide a perfect environment for growth  
264 and toxin production. Our results reported counts of presumptive *S. aureus* with  
265 mean numbers of  $4.6 \times 10^5$  cfu/cm<sup>2</sup>, which may indicate poor personal hygiene  
266 practices, and a potential risk of cross-contamination by cleaning cloths.  
267 Interestingly, 48% of the cloths did not presented presumptive *S. aureus*. This  
268 result indicated that this microorganism may not be present in cleaning cloths,  
269 even knowing that their usage is almost always by direct contact with food  
270 handlers.

271 In the present study high contaminated cleaning cloths were significantly  
272 ( $P < 0.05$ ) disinfected by both methods evaluated i. e. boiling in potable water  
273 for 15 minutes or using 200 ppm solution of sodium hypochlorite for 15 minutes.

274 It is well known that the cleaning process is one important step to reduce  
275 contamination from surfaces due the mechanical removal of dirt, soil and  
276 microorganisms (Kusumaningrum et al., 2003), although cleaning alone is  
277 insufficient to prevent cross-contamination and guarantee disinfection.  
278 Previously, Scott and Bloomfield (1990b), by laboratory tests, have  
279 demonstrated that a temporary reduction of microbial contamination of cloths is  
280 possible by cleaning the cloths with detergent solution. It is important to  
281 emphasize that the expressive microbial reductions (around 5 log)  
282 demonstrated in our study were possible because cloths were cleaned before  
283 disinfection. The cleaning of cloths appears to play an important role in  
284 decontamination process, once microorganisms can be removed from them  
285 resulting in microbial inactivation. As found by several authors, adhered bacteria  
286 appear to be less sensitive to cleaning and disinfection products than bacteria in  
287 suspension (Stopforth et al., 2002; Briandet et al., 1999, Frank and Koffi, 1990).

288 Sodium hypochlorite has an important biocidal activity and is widely  
289 recommended around the world for disinfection processes, however its biocidal  
290 activity depends on several factors such as chlorine concentration, pH,  
291 temperature and the presence of organic matter (Kusumaningrum, 2003),  
292 besides time of exposure to the solution. According to Bessems (1998)  
293 vegetative bacteria are susceptible to chlorine concentrations of 2 to 500 ppm in  
294 environments with low organic matter. Rusin et al. (1998), in a study conducted  
295 in homes, demonstrated that disinfection with hypochlorite products in  
296 combination with a regular cleaning and disinfection schedule could significantly  
297 reduce bacterial contamination from cloths. However, according to Scott and  
298 Bloomfield (1990b) the use of 4000 ppm hypochlorite solution was not

299 sufficiently effective to reduce contamination of cloths mainly when they were  
300 heavily contaminated. The latest study didn't inform if the cloths were cleaned  
301 before disinfection.

302 The slight better reduction levels demonstrated by the boiling method  
303 may be partially explained by the better capacity of removing organic matter by  
304 this method. The high temperature and agitation of the cloths during boiling  
305 could facilitate organic matter removal and consequently the microbial  
306 inactivation. Boiling in water was also further described as an efficient  
307 procedure for reduce contamination in cleaning cloths (Anonymous et al., 2000;  
308 Ikawa and Rossen, 1999; Parnes, 1997).

309 Based on the results of this study, cleaning cloths used in food services  
310 could be very contaminated, however adequate sanitation procedures could be  
311 easily carried out, reducing significantly their microbial contamination. Once  
312 cleaning cloths are very useful in food services, but may represent an  
313 expressive source of contamination, further studies are necessary to determine  
314 the maximum time of usage of cleaning cloths in food services.

315

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Table 1. Total Aerobic Counts (TAC), presumptive coliforms and presumptive *Staphylococcus aureus* contamination of cleaning cloths sampled in food services.

Cloth sample	TAC (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Coliforms (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	presumptive S. <i>aureus</i> (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )
1	$2.3 \times 10^6$	$2.2 \times 10^6$	$2.0 \times 10^4$
2	$1.0 \times 10^5$	$1.9 \times 10^5$	ND
3	$2.7 \times 10^5$	$1.2 \times 10^5$	ND
4	$2.0 \times 10^7$	ND	ND
5	$3.0 \times 10^5$	$1.0 \times 10^4$	$2.0 \times 10^4$
6	$1.0 \times 10^5$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^4$
7	$1.9 \times 10^6$	$1.6 \times 10^6$	$4.0 \times 10^5$
8	$2.0 \times 10^4$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^4$
9	$2.0 \times 10^5$	ND	ND
10	$1.5 \times 10^7$	$6.0 \times 10^6$	$1.0 \times 10^4$
11	$7.1 \times 10^6$	$2.3 \times 10^6$	$2.0 \times 10^4$
12	$4.6 \times 10^6$	$3.0 \times 10^6$	ND
13	$1.7 \times 10^5$	$1.0 \times 10^5$	ND
14	$2.5 \times 10^7$	$2.0 \times 10^6$	$2.8 \times 10^6$
15	$3.8 \times 10^6$	$2.2 \times 10^6$	$1.2 \times 10^5$
16	$1.0 \times 10^8$	$6.1 \times 10^6$	$1.5 \times 10^5$
17	$2.7 \times 10^6$	$7.1 \times 10^5$	ND
18	$1.0 \times 10^7$	$2.9 \times 10^6$	ND

	$19$	$7.2 \times 10^5$	$3.7 \times 10^5$	$1.0 \times 10^4$
	$20$	$3.1 \times 10^6$	$3.7 \times 10^6$	$1.0 \times 10^4$
	$21$	$1.8 \times 10^7$	$5.9 \times 10^6$	ND
	$22$	$1.8 \times 10^5$	$2.0 \times 10^4$	ND
	$23$	$3.3 \times 10^5$	$6.1 \times 10^4$	ND
	$24$	$9.0 \times 10^6$	$2.7 \times 10^5$	ND
	$25$	$7.5 \times 10^6$	$4.4 \times 10^2$	ND
	$26$	$3.0 \times 10^6$	$3.6 \times 10^6$	ND
	$27$	$2.0 \times 10^6$	$2.6 \times 10^6$	ND
	$28$	$3.4 \times 10^7$	$2.3 \times 10^7$	$1.2 \times 10^5$
	$29$	$3.8 \times 10^7$	$1.6 \times 10^7$	$8.0 \times 10^5$
	$30$	$5.9 \times 10^5$	$3.3 \times 10^5$	$4.0 \times 10^5$
	$31$	$3.2 \times 10^6$	ND	ND
	$32$	$1.1 \times 10^6$	$6.1 \times 10^5$	ND
	$33$	$3.0 \times 10^6$	$1.1 \times 10^6$	$2.6 \times 10^6$
	$34$	$1.5 \times 10^6$	$1.5 \times 10^5$	$7.1 \times 10^5$
	$35$	$1.4 \times 10^6$	$2.0 \times 10^5$	$1.2 \times 10^5$

ND: not detected

Table 2. Total Aerobic Counts (TAC), presumptive coliforms, and presumptive *Staphylococcus aureus* contamination of cleaning cloths sampled in food services after disinfection by boiling water and 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution for 15 minutes.

Cloth sample	Disinfection by boiling in water for 15 minutes			Disinfection by 200 ppm sodium hypochlorite for 15 minutes		
	TAC (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Coliforms (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	presumptive S. aureus (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	TAC (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Coliforms (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )	presumptive S.aureus (cfu/cm <sup>2</sup> )
1	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	1.3 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND
2	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	1.8 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	2.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND
3	7.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	8.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND
4	1.4 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND	6.5 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND
5	1.3 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
6	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	2.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND
7	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	1.7 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	6.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	5.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>
8	4.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	9.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>
9	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
10	2.2 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND	> 10 <sup>3</sup>	> 10 <sup>3</sup>	ND
11	2.3 x 10 <sup>3</sup>	ND	ND	9.3 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	1.0 x10 <sup>3</sup>	ND
12	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
13	1.8 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	ND	ND	9.1 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	ND
14	4.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	ND	1.0 x 10 <sup>1</sup>	1.2 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	1.0 x 10 <sup>2</sup>	1.53 x 10 <sup>2</sup>

	$1.2 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$6.1 \times 10^1$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^2$
15	$1.2 \times 10^2$	ND	$7.1 \times 10^1$	$7.1 \times 10^1$	$2.0 \times 10^1$	$2.0 \times 10^1$
16	$1.7 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$1.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
17	$8.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$8.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
18	$4.7 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$2.0 \times 10^1$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^1$
19	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
20	ND	ND	ND	$1.1 \times 10^2$	$1.0 \times 10^1$	ND
21	$3.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$2.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
22	ND	ND	ND	$3.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
23	$4.5 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$5.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
24	$9.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
25	ND	ND	ND	$6.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
26	$4.0 \times 10^1$	$2.0 \times 10^1$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
27	$1.3 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$2.0 \times 10^1$	ND	$1.0 \times 10^1$
28	$1.3 \times 10^2$	ND	ND	$7.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
29	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$5.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
30	ND	ND	ND	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
31	$6.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
32	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$6.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
33	ND	ND	ND	$4.0 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
34	$6.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND	$7.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND
35	ND	ND	ND	$5.1 \times 10^1$	ND	ND

ND: not detected

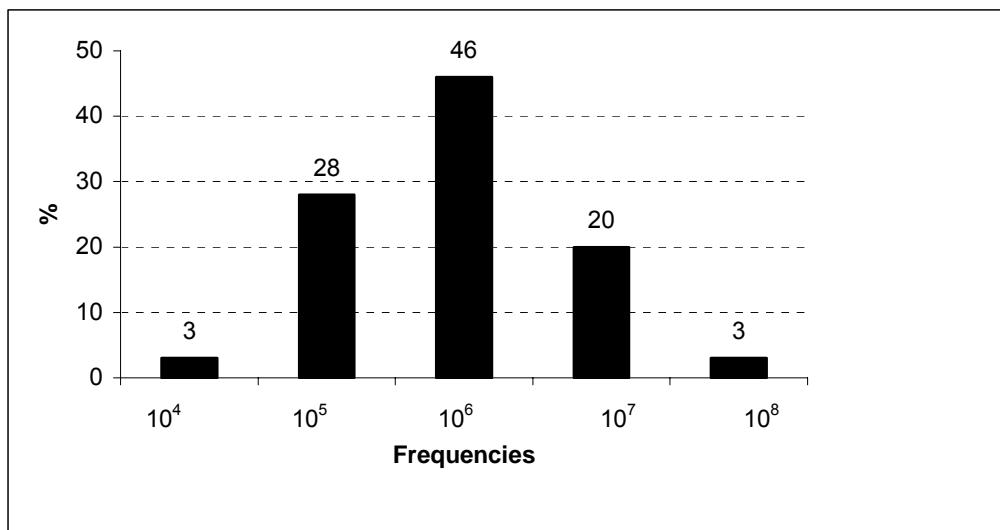


Figure 1. Frequencies of Total Aerobic Counts (TAC) in cleaning cloths collected in food services.

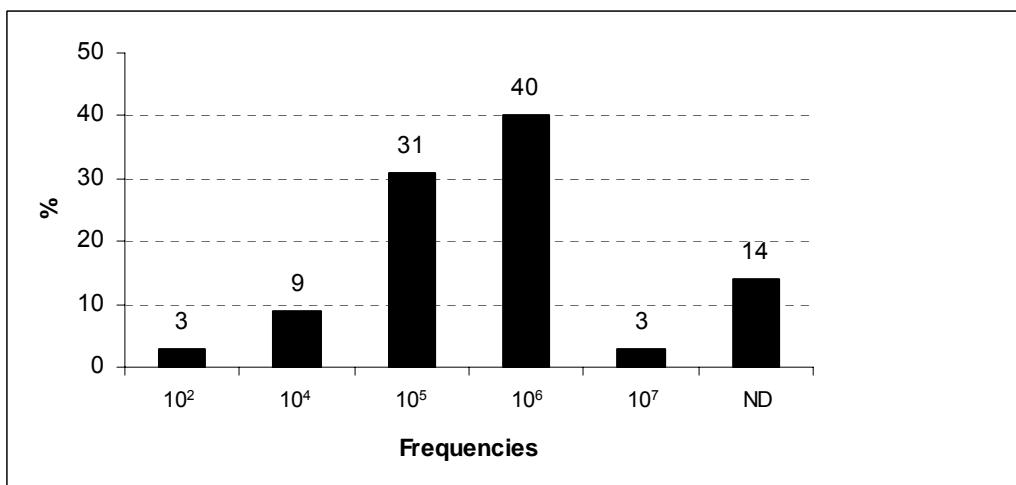


Figure 2. Frequencies of presumptive coliform counts in cleaning cloths collected in food services.

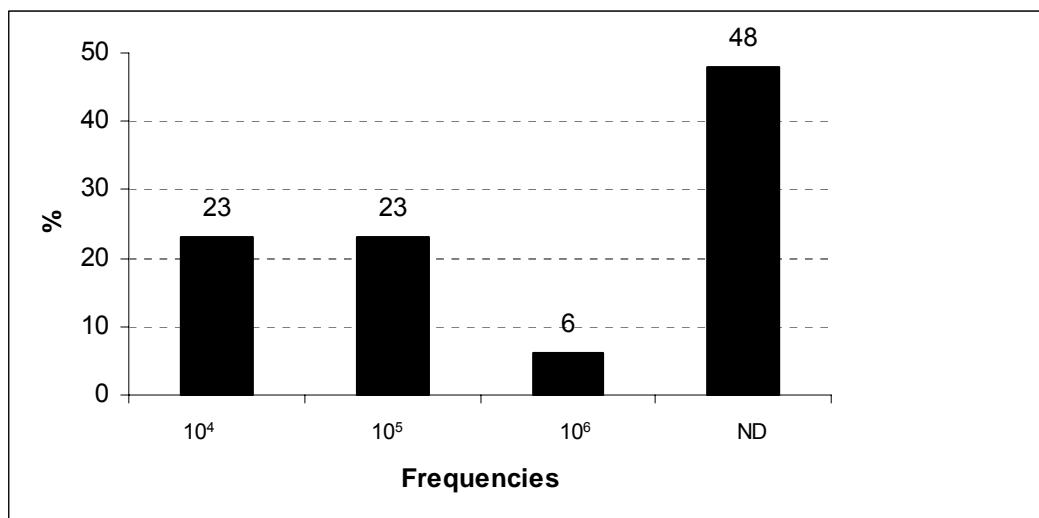


Figure 3. Frequencies of presumptive *Staphylococcus aureus* counts in cleaning cloths collected in food services.

## **2.1.2 Artigo 2**

2.1.2.1 Evaluation of bacterial multiplication in cleaning cloths containing  
different quantities of organic matter

**Microbial multiplication in cleaning cloths****Evaluation of bacterial multiplication in cleaning cloths containing  
different quantities of organic matter**

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**Key words:** cleaning cloths, contamination, disinfection, cross-contamination.

## ABSTRACT

With the purpose to suggest a proper time of cleaning cloths usage, the aim of the present work was to evaluate the bacterial multiplication in artificially contaminated cleaning cloths containing different amounts of organic matter. Cloths containing 1%, 5%, and 10% of bovine albumin were contaminated with *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05, *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972, *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 or *Shigella sonnei* CC07, and were incubated for 1 h, 2 h, 3 h, and 4 h, at 30°C. Microbial multiplication was evaluated by bacterial counts and ATP bioluminescence. An ampicillin-resistant recombinant HSa *E. coli* was used as a pathogen surrogate to investigate the potential of microbial cloth dispersion. Results demonstrate that until two hours of incubation none of the strains showed expressive growth. At 3 hours, the microorganisms demonstrated a slightly increase in counts, being that *E. coli* ATCC 25972 demonstrated a significant increase of cells ( $p < 0.05$ ). ATP bioluminescence confirmed the microbial count results and also demonstrates that the amounts of organic matter tested did not interfere with the bacterial multiplication during the first 3 to 4 hours of incubation. The dispersion experiment indicated that a cleaning cloth contaminated with  $10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> was able to spread  $10^2$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> of recombinant *E. coli* onto a stainless steel surface. Based on these results we suggested that an appropriate period of time to use disinfected cleaning cloths is around 2 hours, not exceeding 3 hours of usage.

Foodborne outbreaks are arising worldwide and the magnitude of this problem is certainly under estimate (6). Cross-contamination is considered the transference of microorganisms from utensils, raw materials, food handlers, surfaces or objects directly or indirectly to foods, being its prevention an important issue to avoid foodborne diseases. According to Ryan et al. (1996) cross-contamination contributed with approximately 28% of the domestic outbreak cases occurred in UK.

The use of cleaning cloths in domestic kitchens and food services remains very frequent, even though it may contributes to cross-contamination. It is well established that adequate disinfection methods could reduce the microbial population, however the maximum time of usage is still an important issue to be investigate. Cleaning cloths are largely used in 'washing-up' processes and because of that they frequently became very contaminated and easily may spread pathogens through kitchen sites and equipments (19). The 'washing-up' process is important to prevent cross-contamination (14), and serve to physically remove organic matter and microorganisms from kitchen sites, objects and equipments. Some authors (5, 9) have reported cleaning cloths as especially contaminated when used for multiple purposes, as wipe down drain board, surfaces and equipments. Scott and Bloomfield (1990b) have demonstrated that when contaminated cleaning cloths are rubbed onto surfaces, microorganisms are invariably transferred to the surface or hands of the food handlers in sufficient numbers to cause foodborne infection. Several researchers have reported high contamination levels of microorganisms in cleaning cloths. As examples, Scott and Bloomfield (1990a, b) have demonstrated counts varying from  $10^2$  to  $10^6$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> of cloths. Kusumaningrum et al. (2003) have recorded microbial contamination of  $10^8$  to  $10^9$  CFU in cloth samples of 18 x 18 cm<sup>2</sup>. Because cleaning cloths can be very contaminated, their usage is not recommended

or, if they are essential, it should be adequately cleaned and disinfected. As reported by several authors (4, 8, 16, 20) cleaning alone is ineffective to inactivate microbial contamination and disinfection procedures must be carried out to eliminate microorganisms. According to Rusin at al. (1998) the combination of a regular cleaning with an adequate disinfection schedule could significantly reduce bacterial contamination from cloths. As an example, sodium hypochlorite was effective against *S. aureus*, *S. Tiphy* and *E. coli* present in cleaning cloths (15).

Even though several food safety regulations do not recommend the use of cleaning cloths, they are still extensively used in domestic kitchens or commercial food services. Their frequent use can be explained because disposable cloths are more expensive and it is very difficult to find a substitute to cleaning cloths. Once adequate cleaning and disinfection procedures could reduce significantly the microbial counts present in cleaning cloths, further studies are necessary to determine its maximum time of usage, without compromise the food safety.

Based on this, the aim of the present study was to evaluate bacterial growth in cleaning cloths containing different quantities of organic matter.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Bacterial Strains.** In the present study different strains were used. *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05 was isolated from a potato salad with home-made mayonnaise that was identified as responsible for a salmonellosis outbreak occurred in Rio Grande do Sul (RS) in 2005. *Shigella sonnei* CC07 was isolated from a food involved in an foodborne outbreak occurred in RS in 2007, *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972 and *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 came from the collection of Laboratório de Microbiologia de Alimentos do Instituto de Ciência e Tecnologia de

Alimentos/UFRGS. Prior to the experiments, all strains were conserved at – 18°C in BHI broth (Merck, RJ, Brazil) containing 50% of glycerol (Reagen, RJ, Brazil).

**Bacterial multiplication in cotton and disposable cloths containing bovine albumin (organic matter).** Bacterial cells were reactivated by transferring a loopful of each individual strain to BHI broth and incubated at 37°C for 24 h. The strain inocula were prepared by transferring 1 ml portions of the activated cultures, separately, into 9 ml of 0.1% sterile peptone water (Nuclear, Diadema, Brazil), preparing a tenfold dilution. Serial dilutions were carried out and a 100 µl portion containing approximately  $10^4$  CFU was inoculated on sterilized cotton and disposable cloth strips (5cm x 1cm), placed inside sterile Petry dishes. The cloths were purchased in a local supermarket, and the disposable cloth did not contain any antibacterial agent to avoid interfering in experiment results. Before inoculation, each cloth strip was added with 0.5 ml of 1% bovine albumin solution (Sigma, St. Louis, USA), aiming to simulate the presence of organic matter (Brasil, 1988). Petry dishes containing the cloth strips were incubated for 0 h, 1 h, 2 h, 3 h, and 4 h, at 30°C, and at each period of time, one cotton and one disposable cloth strips contaminated with each one of the microorganisms were sampled and placed into a 10 ml 0.1% sterile peptone water inside a sterile glass tube that was vigorously agitated during one minute. After, aliquots of 20 µl were taken in triplicates, plated on BHI and incubated overnight, at 37°C. Additionally, *S. Enteritidis* 3091/05 was also inoculated in cotton cloths strips without bovine albumin and enumeration were carried out at the same experimental conditions described above for the other microorganisms. All the bacterial counts were carried out in triplicates and the count procedure was performed as described by Silva et al. (1997). All the experiments were repeated at least twice, being the results expressed in CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>.

**ATP bioluminescence experiments.** With the objective to evaluate the influence of different quantities of organic matter on microbial growth in cloths, ATP bioluminescence was used. Three cotton cloths (20cm x 20cm) previously sterilized by autoclave (121°C for 15 minutes at 1atm) were rubbed in a natural contaminated tile surface to become contaminated. After, the cloths were placed separately into 100 ml of 0.1% sterile peptone water containing 1%, 5%, and 10% of bovine albumin, aiming to add different concentrations of organic matter to the cloths. After the addition of organic matter, the cloths were squeezed by gloved hands and rubbed onto a 70% ethylic alcohol disinfected surface. In times of 0 h, 1 h, 2 h, 3 h, 4 h, and 20 h the ATP bioluminescence were verified with Ultrasnap™ ATP swab and an ATP Luminometer (Hygiena, SistemSURE II, Camarillo, US). During sampling, swab or the inside sampling device were not touched with fingers, and sampling collection were carried out swabbing all the 15cm x 15cm area of tile surface, in three different directions. After swabbing, the swab were placed back into the swab tube and immediately read in the ATP Luminometer. Between the sampling times the cloths were incubated at 30°C inside a sterile plastic bag to allow bacterial growth. Results were expressed in Relative Luminescence Units (RLU), and surface readings with less than 10 RLU were considered clean, while readings between 11 to 29 RLU, and greater than 30 RLU were classified as not adequately cleaned surface or dirty surface, respectively, according to Hygiena USA, criteria.

**Microbial cloth dispersion experiment.** The cotton cloth was artificially contaminated with ampicilin-resistant HSα *E. coli* (Novagen) transformed by calcium chlorite method (gently provided by Prof. Dr. Jeverson Frazzon of Instituto de Ciência e Tecnologia de Alimentos/UFRGS). This recombinant microorganism was used as a pathogen surrogate, aiming to evaluate microbial dispersion by contaminated cloth,

but avoiding hazardous laboratory contamination. The microorganism was growth in ampicilin enriched Luria-Bertini broth, (LB, Merck, RJ, Brazil), for 24 h at 35°C, resulting in a culture of  $1.29 \times 10^9$  CFU/ml. Then, 1 ml of the culture was diluted in 99 ml of 0.1% peptone water and the cloth was placed into the diluted suspension, becoming contaminated. After that, the cotton cloth had  $2.7 \times 10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> of recombinant microorganisms. A stainless steel surface (AISI 316) was cleaned using a sponge and neutral detergent, being rinsed with potable water. After it was disinfected by spraying 70% ethylic alcohol, and left for air drying. To evaluate the disinfection, the surface was swabbed (100 cm<sup>2</sup>) and tested on PCA (control). The contaminated cotton cloth was rubbed several times on the disinfected stainless steel surface, simulating a usual practice of food services. The contaminated stainless steel surface was sampled (100 cm<sup>2</sup>) with a cotton swab which was placed into 10 ml of 0.1% peptone water, vigorously agitated and triplicate aliquots of 20 µl of the homogenate was plated on LB supplemented with 50 µg / ml of ampicilin. The plates were incubated at 35°C overnight and the colonies were counted. The results were expressed as CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

For statistical analysis all the counts were transformed in  $\log_{10}$  and submitted to variance analysis (ANOVA) of Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corp. Redmond, WA) with  $P < 0.05$  being considered significant.

## RESULTS

Figure 1 demonstrates the microbial growth onto cotton cloth containing 1% of bovine albumin. Bovine albumin was added to cloths, aiming to simulate the

presence of organic matter. As shown, the four strains tested did no demonstrate significant growth until 2 hours of incubation. At 3 hours, the microorganisms demonstrated a slightly increase in counts, being that *E. coli* ATCC 25972 demonstrated a significant increase of cells ( $p < 0.05$ ). After 4 hours of incubation, all microorganisms demonstrated significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) higher counts compared to two hours numbers and initial counts. *S. Enteritidis* growing in cotton cloth without organic matter demonstrated the same behavior of *S. Enteritidis* cultivated with 1% bovine albumin (results not shown).

Figure 2 demonstrates microbial growth onto disposable cleaning cloths added with 1% bovine albumin, during 4 hours of incubation. Similar to what happened onto cotton cloth, until 2 hours, the four strains practically did not increase their numbers. After 3 hours of storage, *S. Enteritidis* 3091/05 growth significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ), demonstrating higher counts ( $3.8 \times 10^5$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>) than other microorganisms, followed by *E. coli* ATCC 25972 ( $1.2 \times 10^5$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>), *S. sonnei* CC07 ( $6.7 \times 10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>) and *S. aureus* ATCC 25923 ( $4.3 \times 10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>). After 4 hours, all strains increased their cell numbers significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) comparing to results of two hours of incubation.

Comparing the results obtained with cotton and disposable cloths, *S. Enteritidis* 3091/05 was able to grow better than the other strains after 3 hours of storage ( $p < 0.05$ ), especially in disposable cloth. *S. sonnei* CC07, *S. aureus* ATCC 25923, and *E. coli* 25972 demonstrated similar growth behavior in both types of cloths, i. e. practically not growing until 2 hours of incubation, being that, after 4 hours of incubation, they demonstrated rapid multiplication. Final counts reached in cotton cloths were higher than final counts observed in disposable cloths, however they were not significantly different ( $p > 0.05$ ).

ATP bioluminescence tests confirmed results presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2, i. e. RLU levels practically did not increase until 3 hours of incubation at 30°C, suggesting that microbial growth did not occur during this period. However, at 4 hours a slight RLU increment level was observed, being that after overnight incubation RLU levels increased expressively, indicating microbial development (Figure 3). The results also indicated that bovine albumin concentration did not influence RLU levels until 4 hours of incubation, however after 20 hours with 1% bovine albumin, 262 RLU were generated, while with 5% and 10%, RLU levels were 518 and 659, respectively. Based on these results and according Hygiena luminometer criteria, the tile surface could be considered clean after wiped with a cloth containing different amounts of bovine albumin and incubated until 3 hours at 30°C. After 3 to 4 hours of incubation of the cleaning cloths, wiped surfaces were considered not adequately cleaned and with 20 hours incubation, the surfaces cleaned with cloths were considered dirt.

Recombinant *E. coli* was used to simulate the possible microbial dispersion due to cloths minimally contaminated during real usage in food services. As demonstrated on Table 1, cotton cloths containing approximately  $10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> were able to transfer around  $10^2$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> to a stainless steel surface.

## DISCUSSION

It is well documented that cleaning cloths could be very contaminated (11, 20, 22), but this contamination could be reduced significantly by appropriate cleaning and disinfection methods (1, 16). Based on this, the study of bacterial multiplication in cloths became very important once it could help the estimation of proper time of usage.

Bacteria attached to fiber cloths may multiply vigorously due to the presence of food residues and humidity, and also because they frequently remain for long times at room temperature inside domestic kitchens or food services. Expressive microbial contamination, as well as the risk of transfer microorganisms to food handlers or equipment surfaces has been reported by Bloomfield and Scott (1997). In a previous study Scott and Bloomfield (1990b) have reported the growth of residual survivors when cleaning cloths were storage overnight post-disinfection. Cogan et al. (2002) have demonstrated that cloths used to wipe chopping boards that had been used to prepare *Salmonella*-contaminated chickens became immediately contaminated with mean levels of bacterial counts of  $4.2 \times 10^5$  CFU/200 cm<sup>2</sup>. After overnight storage at 20°C, the bacterial counts arise to mean numbers of  $6.6 \times 10^8$  CFU/200 cm<sup>2</sup>, and in some cloths *Salmonella* counts increased 3 log. In our work cotton and disposable cloths added with bovine albumin were contaminated with four different strains of microorganisms and the results showed that bacterial counts did not increase after 2 hours of storage, at 30°C. The microorganisms were inoculated in levels of approximately 10<sup>4</sup> CFU/cm<sup>2</sup>, once previous studies of our laboratory have demonstrated that this quantity was the minimal amount of heterotrophic microorganisms found in used cleaning cloths sampled in food services and also in cloths purchased in supermarkets, without being submitted to any clean or disinfection procedure (data not shown). In the present study, cloths artificially contaminated practically did not change their microbial levels during 2 hours of storage. Such results could be explained, probably, by the lag phase of bacteria inoculated in cloths, once all the strains tested presented the same behavior, with or without organic matter. At lag phase, bacterial cells became adapted to the new environment, activating or disactivating genes, and consequently, metabolic

pathways, preparing to the next phase of growth, i. e. exponential growth. Malheiros et al. (2007) have reported that different *Salmonella* serovars presented a lag phase of around 2 hours when activated in BHI and inoculated in Nutrient broth or home-made mayonnaise. The same authors have cited that when bacterial cells are stressed by some food treatment or chemical products, the lag phase usually get longer. Based on this and remembering that strains tested in the present work were inoculated in cloths with organic matter and after activation in a non selective medium (BHI), lag phase of these microorganisms in cloths in real conditions could be 2 hours or longer.

Our results showed that, after 2 hours of storage at 30°C, the majority of the microorganisms tested demonstrated a slightly bacterial growth, being that all the microorganisms presented significant growth after 3 or 4 hours of incubation ( $P < 0.05$ ). These results indicate that long periods of storage at 30°C can improve bacterial growth in cloths and subsequently arise the risk of cross-contamination.

These results were confirmed by ATP bioluminescence, which was used to test if different amounts of bovine albumin could influence bacterial development during the first hours of cloth contamination. Once the luminometer measures adenosine triphosphate (ATP) from organic matter or from animal, plant, bacterial, yeast and mold cells, being considered a rapid and sensitive method, it was also used to verify possibly microbial growth with different amounts of organic matter. Our results showed that ATP counts started to increase after three hours of incubation, in cloths with 1%, 5%, and 10% of bovine albumin, suggesting that, even with different amounts of organic matter, microorganisms did not develop during the first three hours.

Surrogate organisms are used to mimic growth and survival patterns of a pathogen and help to explain what occurs with a pathogen during handling and storage (7). Besides that, researchers prefer to use a surrogate instead of a pathogen to prevent contamination of environment/laboratory with harmful organisms. In our work a recombinant strain of non pathogenic *E. coli* was used to determine the microbial dispersion caused by artificially contaminated cloths to stainless steel surfaces. The results demonstrated that a cloth containing initial numbers of  $2.7 \times 10^4$  CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> was able to transfer around 10<sup>2</sup> CFU/cm<sup>2</sup> to surfaces. Considering that there are some food pathogens with very low infectious doses (7), attention should be given to the cross-contamination potential of the cleaning cloths.

Based on these results, it is possible to conclude that an appropriate period of time to use disinfected cleaning cloths is around 2 hours, not exceeding 3 hours. It is also important to combine the time of usage with good manufacturing practices and appropriate cleaning and disinfection methods.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

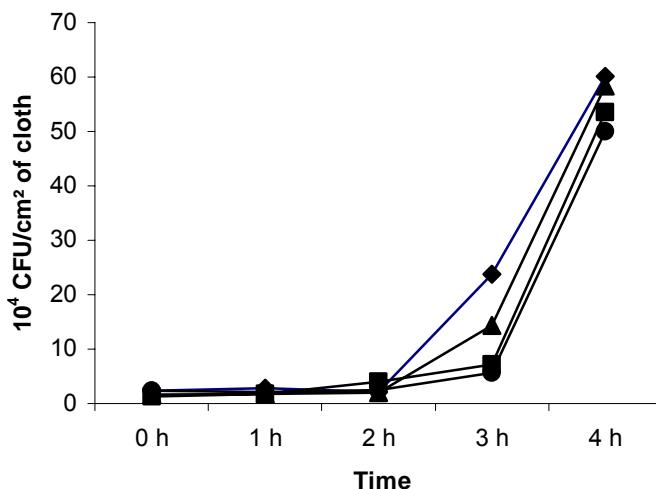
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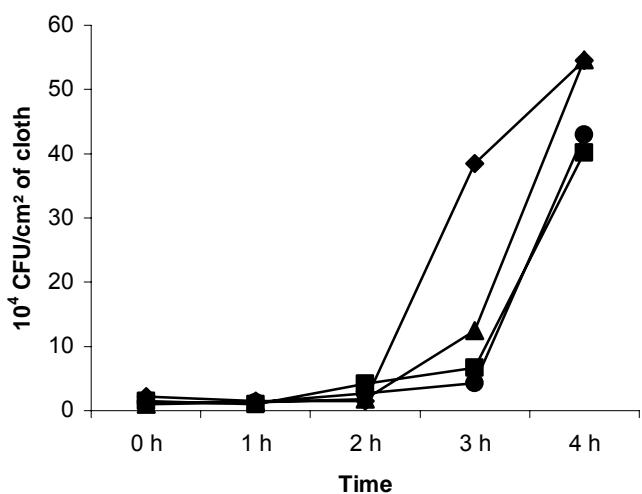
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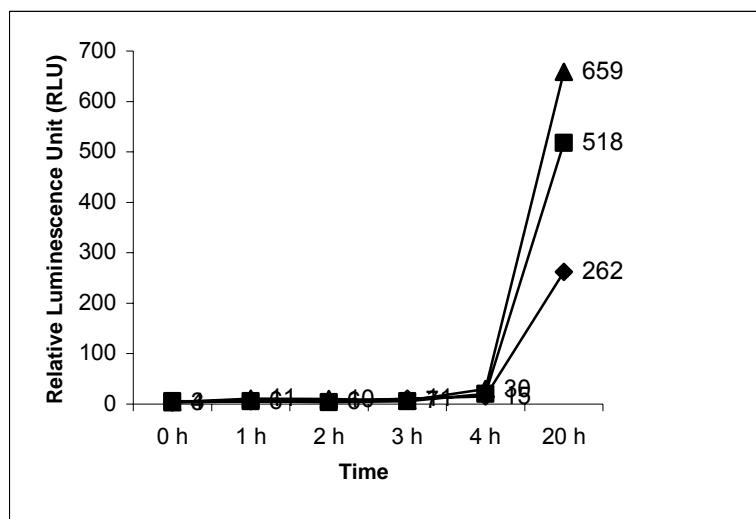
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**Figure 1.** *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05 (♦), *Shigella sonnei* CC07 (■), *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 (●), and *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972 (▲) growth in cotton cloth containing 1% bovine albumin at 30°C.



**Figure 2.** *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05 (♦), *Shigella sonnei* CC07 (■), *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 (●), and *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25972 (▲) growth in disposable cloth containing 1% bovine albumin at 30 °C.



**Figure 3.** ATP bioluminescence originated from surfaces rubbed with contaminated cotton cloths containing 1% (♦), 5% (■), and 10% (▲) of bovine albumin solution after different periods of incubation at 30°C.

**Table 1.** Recombinant *E. coli* dispersion present in cotton cloths rubbed in stainless steel surface.

Controls counts (CFU/cm <sup>2</sup> )		Recombinant <i>E. coli</i> counts	
Sterilized cloth	Stainless steel Surface	Initial cloth contamination (CFU/cm <sup>2</sup> )	Surface contamination after dispersion by cloth (CFU/cm <sup>2</sup> )
ND	ND	$2.7 \times 10^4$	$5.62 \pm 1.43 \times 10^2$

ND: not detected

## CAPÍTULO 3

### 3.1 DISCUSSÃO GERAL

O uso de panos de limpeza, embora não recomendado, é uma prática comum na maioria dos serviços de alimentação. Esses panos são normalmente utilizados como auxiliares nos procedimentos de limpeza de bancadas, equipamentos e utensílios e, por esse motivo, podem facilmente acumular resíduos de alimentos, assim como contaminação por microrganismos.

Em nosso estudo foram coletados 35 panos de limpeza de algodão utilizados em serviços de alimentação no Rio Grande do Sul visando avaliar a contaminação dos mesmos por bactérias heterotróficas totais, *Staphylococcus aureus* e coliformes.

A quantidade de microrganismos presentes nos panos de limpeza é normalmente bastante alta, conforme relatado por diversos autores (DE WIT, 1979, DE BOER, E.; HAHNE, M., 1990, COGAN et al., 1999, JOSEPHSON et al., 1997, RUSIN et al., 1988). Scott e Bloomfield (1990a) demonstraram que panos de limpeza podem apresentar contagens de microrganismos variando de  $10^2$  até  $10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano, sendo então considerados fonte e reservatório de microrganismos. Outros autores (KUSUMANINGRUM et al, 2003) também relataram altas contaminações por microrganismos em panos, com contagens variando de  $10^8$  a  $10^9$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. Nossos resultados foram semelhantes aos relatados anteriormente, com contagens de bactérias heterotróficas totais variando de  $10^4$  até  $10^8$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano.

Outro fator que poderia contribuir para a alta contaminação encontrada em panos de limpeza, além da diversidade de uso dos mesmos dentro de um serviço de alimentação, é a própria estrutura do pano, composto por uma trama de fibras, o que permite o acúmulo de resíduos de alimentos, facilitando a adesão e proteção de microrganismos nos mesmos (KUSUMANINGRUM et al., 2003). Além disso, esses panos permanecem úmidos durante o período de trabalho e são mantidos em temperatura ambiente, o que poderia possibilitar o crescimento dos microrganismos. Cabe salientar que, no momento da coleta das amostras, não foi investigado o tempo em que estes panos estavam em uso, bem como se os mesmos eram submetidos a procedimentos de higienização.

A presença de coliformes em alimentos ou equipamentos é sugerida como indicador de segurança dos mesmos (ICMSF, 1986) e, de acordo com Gerba (2001), os coliformes podem ser utilizados como indicadores de perigos microbiológicos em alimentos. A presença destes microrganismos nos panos de limpeza pode ser

atribuída a diversos fatores, tais como manipulação inadequada dos mesmos durante o preparo de alimentos, contaminação através de produtos crus, falta de utilização de procedimentos adequados de higienização, falta de procedimentos de higiene pessoal pelos manipuladores, entre outros. Nosso estudo demonstrou quantidades médias de coliformes nos panos em torno de  $2,9 \times 10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>, sendo que em apenas 5 amostras eles não foram detectados. Esses resultados podem sugerir a presença de outros patógenos alimentares, o que poderia ser considerado fator de risco para contaminação cruzada. Além disso, é importante salientar que a *Escherichia coli* é um coliforme que esteve relacionado com diversos surtos alimentares no RS nos últimos anos (SECRETARIA DE VIGILÂNCIA EM SAÚDE, 2005) e estudos prévios relataram que mesmo baixas contagens de *E. coli* são suficientes para causar surtos em alguns casos (HASSAN, A. N.; FRANK, J.F., 2004).

Os resultados ainda demonstraram contagens bastante variáveis de *Staphylococcus aureus* presuntivos, sendo que em várias amostras este microrganismo não foi detectado, porém em outras, as contagens encontradas foram de até  $10^6$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano. Conforme descrito por Oulahal et al. (2008) o *S. aureus* é um patógeno oportunista que pode causar intoxicações alimentares, além disso, conforme relatado por Arbuthnott (1990), este microrganismo está normalmente presente nas mucosas, nariz, garganta e pele de humanos. Hataka et al. (2000) relataram que a manipulação inadequada é o principal fator relacionado com a presença de *S. aureus* em alimentos e no RS este fator foi identificado como causador de, em média, 10% dos surtos alimentares no período entre 1997 e 2000 (SECRETARIA DE VIGILÂNCIA EM SAÚDE, 2005). As contagens médias de *S. aureus* em nosso estudo variaram em torno de  $4,6 \times 10^5$  UF/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano, o que poderia ser associado a más condições de higiene dos manipuladores, além de poder indicar risco de contaminação cruzada por panos de limpeza. Porém, cabe ressaltar que em 48% dos panos de limpeza avaliados, não foi detectada a presença de *S. aureus*.

De acordo com os resultados obtidos na avaliação da contaminação de panos de limpeza e conforme já discutido anteriormente por outros autores (SCOTT, E.; BLOOMFIELD, S.F., 1990; ENRIQUEZ et al., 1997; SCOTT, E., 1999), o potencial de contaminação cruzada via panos é bastante alto, porém, a possibilidade da ocorrência de contaminação cruzada está associada não somente com a

probabilidade de transferência de microrganismos de um local para outro, mas também com a freqüência com que microrganismos patogênicos são encontrados nesses locais (BLOOMFIELD, S.F.; SCOTT, E., 1997). Dessa forma, é necessário considerar-se a aplicação de procedimentos de higienização adequados, principalmente para panos.

O uso de desinfetantes químicos pode ser uma alternativa adequada, principalmente para as áreas mais críticas na produção de alimentos, como demonstrado por vários autores (ZAO et al., 1998; ENRIQUEZ et al. 1997; JOSPHSON et al., 1997; RUSIN et al., 1998). Outros autores também relataram que a fervura em água também é um procedimento eficiente para reduzir a contaminação de panos de limpeza (ANONYMOUS et al., 2000, IKAWA, J.Y.; ROSEN, J.S., 1999, PARNES, 1997). Além disso, de acordo com Kusumaningrum et al (2003) o processo de limpeza é uma etapa importante para a redução de contaminação, uma vez que neste processo é removida matéria orgânica, assim como parte dos microrganismos presentes pela ação mecânica. Neste trabalho dois procedimentos de desinfecção foram testados posteriormente à lavagem manual dos panos com água e detergente neutro: a) imersão em solução de hipoclorito a 200ppm e b) fervura em água por 15 minutos.

O hipoclorito de sódio apresenta uma importante atividade biocida e é amplamente recomendado em todo o mundo em processos de desinfecção, no entanto, sua atividade biocida depende de vários fatores tais como concentração de cloro livre, pH, temperatura, presença de matéria orgânica (KUSUMANINGRUM et. al., 2003), além do tempo de exposição. De acordo com Bessems (1998) as bactérias na forma vegetativa são suscetíveis a concentrações de cloro de 2 a 500ppm em ambientes com pouca matéria orgânica. Rusin et al. (1998) também demonstraram que a desinfecção com soluções de hipoclorito, quando combinadas com procedimentos regulares de limpeza e desinfecção, puderam reduzir significativamente a contaminação microbiológica de panos.

Os resultados dos procedimentos de desinfecção demonstraram que, mesmo apresentando altas contagens iniciais de microrganismos, ambos foram significativamente eficientes para a desinfecção dos panos, atingindo reduções em torno de 5 log. Nesse sentido, a lavagem manual dos panos parece ter contribuído com os resultados obtidos com os dois procedimentos de desinfecção após ambos os procedimentos. O procedimento de desinfecção através de fervura por 15 minutos

demonstrou ser levemente mais eficiente do que o uso de solução clorada, porém não de forma significativa. Isso poderia ser parcialmente explicado pela melhor remoção de matéria orgânica neste processo, uma vez que a alta temperatura e a agitação dos panos durante a fervura pode ter facilitado a remoção de matéria orgânica e consequentemente a inativação dos microrganismos.

Como demonstrado anteriormente por vários autores, os panos de limpeza podem ser considerados importantes fontes de contaminação cruzada (MACKINTOSH, C.A.; HOFFMANN, P.N., 1984; TEBBUTT, 1986; SCOTT, E.; BLOOMFIELD, S.F., 1990b), principalmente por apresentarem altos níveis de contaminação quando não submetidos a procedimentos de higienização adequados (BLOOMFIELD, S.F.; SCOTT, E., 1997; RUSIN et al., 1998). Nesse sentido, a multiplicação de bactérias nos panos é um fator importante a ser considerado visando-se evitar o risco de contaminação cruzada. Em trabalhos anteriores, Scott e Bloomfield (1990b) relataram o crescimento de bactérias residuais em panos de limpeza após armazenamento de um dia para outro, mesmo após os panos terem sido submetidos a procedimentos de desinfecção. Além disso, Cogan et al. (2002) demonstraram que panos utilizados para limpar placas de cortes que haviam sido usadas para preparar frango contaminado com *Salmonella* apresentaram uma contaminação de  $4,2 \times 10^5$  UFC/200cm<sup>2</sup> de pano imediatamente após a limpeza das placas, e, após armazenadas de um dia para outro a 20°C, as contagens bacterianas médias aumentaram para em torno de  $6,6 \times 10^8$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>.

No presente estudo panos de algodão e panos descartáveis contendo 1% de albumina bovina foram artificialmente contaminados com quatro diferentes linhagens de microrganismos, separadamente: *Salmonella Enteritidis* 3091/05, *E. coli* ATCC 25972, *Shigella sonnei* CC07 and *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 25923 e armazenados em temperatura de 30°C por 1, 2, 3 e 4 horas a fim de avaliar o desenvolvimento dos diferentes microrganismos nos panos contendo matéria orgânica (albumina bovina). Os panos foram inicialmente contaminados com aproximadamente  $10^4$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>, uma vez que essa foi a quantidade mínima de microrganismos encontrados nos panos inicialmente avaliados, bem como a quantidade mínima encontrada em panos de algodão comprados no comércio, sem terem sido utilizados (dados não mostrados). Os resultados demonstraram que as contagens iniciais não aumentaram em até 2 horas de armazenamento. Esses resultados poderiam ser explicados, provavelmente, pela fase lag das bactérias

inoculadas nos panos, uma vez que todas as espécies inoculadas demonstraram o mesmo comportamento em panos adicionados de matéria orgânica e em panos sem matéria orgânica (dados não mostrados). Na fase lag ocorre a adaptação das células bacterianas ao novo ambiente, ativando e desativando genes e, consequentemente, alterando padrões metabólicos, preparando a célula para a próxima fase, ou seja, a fase de crescimento exponencial. Malheiros et al. (2007) relatou que diferentes sorovares de *Salmonella* apresentam uma fase lag de aproximadamente 2 horas quando ativadas com BHI e inoculadas em caldo nutriente ou maionese caseira. Os mesmos autores citaram que quando as células bacterianas são estressadas por tratamento térmico ou produtos químicos, a fase lag geralmente aumenta. Baseados nisso e lembrando que as linhagens testadas no presente trabalho foram inoculadas em panos contendo matéria orgânica após ativação num meio não seletivo (BHI), a fase lag desses microrganismos em panos em condições reais poderia ser de 2 horas ou mais.

Nossos resultados demonstraram ainda que, após 3 horas de incubação a 30°C, a maioria dos microrganismos testados apresentaram pouco crescimento, com exceção da *E. coli* que apresentou crescimento significativo ( $p < 0,05$ ). Após 4 horas de incubação, todos os microrganismos testados apresentaram crescimento significativo, indicando que longos períodos de armazenamento a uma temperatura de 30°C podem permitir o crescimento bacteriano em panos e consequentemente aumentar o risco de contaminação cruzada.

Os resultados acima descritos foram também confirmados por testes de bioluminescência, os quais foram utilizados para avaliar se diferentes quantidades de matéria orgânica (albumina bovina) poderiam influenciar no desenvolvimento bacteriano em panos durante as primeiras horas de armazenamento. Esses testes são considerados rápidos e sensíveis, uma vez que o luminômetro mede a quantidade de ATP (adenosine trifostato) presente em matérias orgânicas, animais, plantas, bactérias e fungos. O teste do luminômetro demonstrou que as contagens bacterianas permaneceram praticamente inalteradas, independente da quantidade de matéria orgânica adicionada aos panos (1, 5 e 10% de albumina bovina), sugerindo que, mesmo com diferentes quantidades de matéria orgânica os microrganismos não são capazes de se desenvolver após poucas horas de incubação a 30°C.

Visando avaliar a capacidade de transferência de contaminação por panos para uma superfície de aço inoxidável e evitar a contaminação do laboratório por microrganismos patogênicos, uma bactéria recombinante (*E. coli* HSα ampicilina resistente) não patogênica foi utilizada. Conforme descrito por James (2006) microrganismos substitutos são utilizados para simularem o modelo de crescimento e sobrevivência de patógenos alimentares e colaboram para explicar o que ocorre com um patógeno durante as etapas de manipulação e armazenamento de alimentos.

Os resultados obtidos com a bactéria recombinante mostraram que, um pano de algodão, contendo aproximadamente  $2,7 \times 10^4$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup> de pano é capaz de transmitir para a superfície de aço inoxidável em torno de  $10^2$  UFC/cm<sup>2</sup>. Assim sendo, considerando que alguns microrganismos patogênicos apresentam doses infectivas bastante baixas (JAMES, 2006) deve-se levar em conta o potencial de contaminação cruzada dos panos de limpeza quando não apropriadamente utilizados.

Baseados nos resultados do presente estudo, panos de algodão utilizados em serviços de alimentação podem se apresentar bastante contaminados, entretanto, é possível que sejam utilizados, desde que sejam submetidos a procedimentos adequados de higienização, e o tempo de uso dos mesmos também seja controlado, devendo ficar em torno de 2 horas, não excedendo três horas. Adicionalmente é essencial que procedimentos de boas práticas sejam implementados nos serviços de alimentação.

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